



# THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

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**Bilingual Greek/English Children in State Elementary  
Schools in Cyprus: A question of language and identity.**

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Doctor of Education

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## Declaration

This thesis has been composed solely by me. Its contents have not been previously published and have not been submitted for another degree. The thesis does not exceed 70,000 words in length exclusive of tables, figures, references and appendices.

## Abstract

Though only a small island, Cyprus experiences particularly high rates of mixed-marriages, and has one of the highest per capita ratios of immigrants in Europe. Consequently, there are a growing number of bilingual and bicultural children now entering the state elementary school system. The aim of this study is to examine the school experiences, language and identity of a select group of Greek English speaking children who have one Cypriot and one non-Cypriot parent. The sub-questions of the study focus on how the children manage languages at school, their perceptions of their peers and teachers and their opinions about the responsiveness of the school and teachers to their bilingualism. Additionally, while recognizing the fluidity and multiplicity of identity, questions about the expressions of the children's dual national identities within school are considered. Finally, concerns over integration at school are also explored.

The study claims social justice for this group, and develops a qualitative case study to engage with the manner in which the children employ their Greek and English language abilities at school, accompanied by their perceptions of the representations of their dual national identities. Multiple, individual, in-depth interviews were conducted with eight children, aged ten to twelve. Interviews with parents were also conducted as a means of strengthening the depth of the data. Additional artifacts such as language use charts, sentence completion exercises and brochures were also collected and analyzed. Using a thematic approach data was examined with the aim of understanding how the children experience their bilingualism and biculturalism within the school. The study constitutes the first of its kind in the Cypriot context and its findings are valuable for researchers, practitioners and policy makers alike.

The results suggest that languages are ‘kept separate’ at school, there is a lack of recognition of this group’s bilingualism and there are possible issues of some children’s Cognitive-Academic Language proficiency (Cummins, 1979). Additionally, teachers and schools presented as ill prepared and nonresponsive to the linguistic needs of this group of children. Further findings indicate that the children experience incidents of teasing and exclusion influenced by the highly hellenocentric ethos of Cypriot schools.

The study concludes that the limited definition of a bilingual student used by the Ministry of Education and Culture in Cyprus, combined with an ineffectual multiculturalism, result in this group being overlooked. The thesis suggests a broadening of the current definition of a bilingual student and a further exploration of children’s linguistic profiles. The study concludes that the children’s school experience is characterized by difference blindness to their dual cultural backgrounds and linguistic blindness to their bilingualism, broken only by regulated incidents of performance. Importantly the study also reveals that though impacted by a weak policy and difference blindness, these children engage in active agency in constructing social roles and understandings of language and identity at school. They demonstrate resilience and flexibility and are aware of the nuances of the school, the global value of their bilingualism, the access and opportunities provided by their knowledge of English and the prospects and experiences available to them through their dual cultural identities.

## Acknowledgements

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## Abbreviations

MoEC – Ministry of Education and Culture

LoI – Language of Instruction

LEP - Limited English Proficiency

LGP – Limited Greek Proficiency

L1 – First Language

L2 – Second Language

Dimottico – Primary school

SMG – Standard Modern Greek

GCD – Greek Cypriot Dialect

EOKA – Ethniki Organosi Kyprion Agoniston – Ethnic Organization of Cypriot Fighters

## Chapter One: Introduction

### Rationale for the Thesis

International migration has dramatically increased over the last several decades. Cyprus, though only a small island, has since its induction into the European Union experienced this phenomenon of migration on an increased scale. In fact Cyprus has one of the highest per capita ratios of immigrants in Europe. This increased contact between Cypriots and non-Cypriots has resulted in a growing number of mixed- marriages between people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Statistics for 2009 indicate 49% of marriages in Cyprus are mixed; and in 2011 12% of children entering elementary school did not speak Greek as a mother tongue. The result of this increased migration has been a steady rise in the number of children entering the state elementary school system with dual languages and cultures.

This thesis uses a qualitative case study to explore what a group of Greek/English bilingual children report about their experiences of language and identity in the state primary education system in the Republic of Cyprus. Included in this study are Cypriot, children who arrive at state elementary schools with two languages and two cultural references by virtue of having one Cypriot and one non-Cypriot parent. The thesis is positioned from a place of advocacy through social justice for this group of children. Additional aims of the thesis are to examine what the children report about how they experience their bilingualism at school, in particular how, when and where they use their languages at school. Furthermore the thesis examines what the children report about how the school, teachers and their peers respond to their bilingualism at school. This is vital because currently the educational system in Cyprus does not offer bilingual education programs beyond the teaching of Greek as a foreign language.

Further aims of the study are to examine what the children report about how they experience their identity(ies) in the school context with particular reference to how they perceive themselves at school and how they interpret others perceive them. This is of consequence given the heavily ethnocentric and xenophobic characterization of the state school system in Cyprus. Important in the expressions of the children's identities at school are issues of integration and school responsiveness to the children's dual national identities. In exploring these areas, the thesis acknowledges the role of a fluid and multiple identity construct. This study constitutes the first of its kind in the Cypriot context and its findings are relevant to researchers, practitioners and policy makers.

## An Overview of the Thesis

This thesis is heavily steeped in its local context, an understanding of which will be necessary for the reader. For this reason Chapter Two begins by examining the unique local context of Cyprus, including an historical exploration of the country and an examination of the position of traditional minority and non-traditional minority groups in Cyprus. Concurrent to this, the role of English as a *lingua franca* within the Cypriot context is examined. The chapter continues with an overview of the local educational system and its development which has been profoundly influenced by the historical and political situation on the island. There is then an exploration of nationalism within the Cypriot educational system and the affect this has had on the construct of Cypriot identity. Finally the chapter concludes by examining the role of new minority groups in Cypriot education and society, the Ministry of Education and Culture's (MoEC) policy on bilingual education and the influence of colour blind theory on the teachers' and schools' responsiveness to new minority groups in Cyprus.

Chapter Three surveys the literature relevant to this research. Literature is examined within three separate but inter-related areas so as to create context for the study. The

first area is education with particular reference to the role of politics and schooling, the purpose of schools and the power relationships which develop both on a macro and micro level of schools. Additionally, this section examines the place of student voice in research on schools and school cultures, important in providing a context for the research in this study. The chapter then investigates the literature on bilingualism beginning by providing a definition of bilingualism for use in the study, contemporary understandings of bilingualism as well as bilingual children in education. The section continues by looking at work on the nature of identity with particular focus on group, national, multiple and hierarchical identity constructs. This chapter concludes with an analysis of the relationship between race, language and identity within a postmodern framework and the local Cypriot context.

Prior to exploring the research and methods used in the study, Chapter Four examines the researcher's personal background, position and motivation within the research. Included here is the consideration of the influences of insider and outsider status on the research process, along with issues of gender, adulthood and the immigrant status of the researcher in Cyprus. These are important to delineate as the research is heavily influenced by researcher positionality and the local context.

Chapter Five introduces the methods used in the study by considering case study research and its application to this work. The chapter continues by exploring the epistemological and ontological influences on the research and follows this with a discussion of the relevance of social justice within this study. Next the chapter outlines the importance of issues of children's agency and ethical practices in research with children. The chapter concludes with a delineation of the parameters of the study including the research participants, data gathering methods and ethical concerns.



Chapter Six presents the data from the study. This data is primarily extracts from interviews conducted with the children. The chapter begins with an analysis of the data collected through the language use charts and continues reporting on the themes and sub-themes which arose from the interview data. These themes are presented under the headings of Managing Language at School, and Identity and School Experiences as these link to the main research concerns for the study. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the data collected as artefacts in the study, specifically the sentence completion task and the brochures produced by the children for the study.

Chapter Seven discusses the implications of the data by drawing together the themes and issues uncovered through the research. The chapter begins by exploring what the data revealed about the children's experience of language at school, specifically how they children manage Greek at school, the role of the teacher, the role of the school and parents in the children's academic proficiency in Greek. It then examines English at school and discusses implications drawn from the data for bilingual children in state elementary school in Cyprus. The second half of the chapter discusses the children's experiences of identity at school. It focuses on their expressions of feeling Greek at school and how they perceive others see them within the school context. Here the issues of teasing, the role of race, nationalism and power are all discussed in relation to the children's experiences. The chapter concludes by discussing difference blindness and its effect on the children's experiences of language and identity at school.

The final chapter presents the conclusions of the study. It examines the aims and limitations of a small scale qualitative work such as this and continues by exploring the implications drawn from this work. These implications can be seen in the following areas, the issues faced by bilingual children in state elementary schools, the identity experiences at school of these children, issues in Cypriot educational policy and conceptualizations of mixedness and race. The thesis then concludes by discussing the

influences on the findings and the areas of possible future research which this work may affect.

## Chapter Two: The Local Context of Cyprus

### 2.0 Introduction

This study is heavily steeped within the specific context and history of Cyprus; knowledge of which will be important to understanding the specific results and interpretations drawn throughout this thesis. As such this chapter begins by providing the setting and background to the study. It provides an overview of the pertinent historical context of Cyprus, and continues by exploring the roles of traditional and non-traditional minority group in Cyprus. The chapter then looks at the role of English as a *lingua franca* in Cyprus, and follows this by examining the Cypriot educational system with particular emphasis on the role of nationalism and the formation, or lack thereof, of a 'Cypriot' identity. The chapter continues by considering the place of new minorities who have arrived in Cyprus and their influence on education with particular focus on how the educational system, which does not offer bilingual education, has responded to these new bilingual students. The chapter concludes with a discussion of new developments in Cypriot education with particular reference to new educational reforms recently embarked upon.

### 2.1 A Brief History of Cyprus

#### 2.1.1 British Rule to Independence

The Republic of Cyprus<sup>1</sup> is a tiny island in the Eastern Mediterranean which has had a tumultuous history; an exhaustive description of which would require much more space than available. Nonetheless, the history and context of the island play an integral part in the study explained further in this writing. Cyprus' road to independence began after three hundred years of Ottoman rule when it fell under British rule from 1878 to 1960.

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<sup>1</sup> The Republic of Cyprus will be referred to hereafter simply as Cyprus.

Throughout this period of British rule, the two main ethnic groups of Greeks and Turks have been described as experiencing an increase in nationalist loyalties (Bryant, 2004, 2006). This nationalist sentiment led to considerable inter-ethnic conflict throughout the 1950's with a movement among Greek Cypriots for *enosis* (union) with Greece championed by the National Organization of Cypriot Fighters (EOKA). This arguably led to an increased sense of vulnerability and nationalism among Turkish Cypriots (Mirbagheri, 1998, p13) and a responding call for *taksim* (division) through the Turkish Resistance Organization (TMT). British recruitment of Turkish Cypriots to the auxiliary police force used to fight EOKA further exasperated the volatile mood on the island through the 1950's up until independence. As a result, it was a Cyprus in conflict which gained independence from Britain in 1960 with the creation of a state where independence did not satisfy either ethnic group, and which has been described as 'the reluctant republic' (Xydis, 1973). The mood of independence was further complicated as the newly established constitution was to be guaranteed by Greece, Turkey and Britain and ceded ninety-nine square miles of land to Britain as 'sovereign British territory' (Mallinson, 2009, p 31).

### 2.1.2 Independence to European Accession

Unfortunately for Cyprus, independence did not mark an end to the conflict between the two communities and between 1963 and 1967, significant episodes of inter-ethnic violence took place. This violence resulted in approximately one fifth of the Turkish Cypriot population moving into refugee camps and enclaves throughout the island (Papadakis, Peristianis & Welz, 2006, p 3). The arrival of the United Nations in 1967 led to a reduction in inter-ethnic conflict and the situation appeared more stable. However an unsuccessful coup by Greek Cypriots in July 1974 altered this mood, particularly as the lack of American and British outrage and condemnation after the event infuriated the Turks who began preparations for an invasion under the guise of their guarantor powers. Invasion in July 1974 resulted in 200,000 Greek Cypriots

moving from the ‘occupied’ areas of the north, to the south and the majority of remaining Turkish Cypriots moving north. The second wave of invasion produced the *de facto* separation of the island with borders between the two communities essentially closed and trade ceased. The result was there was now both a physical and symbolic division of the island’s main communities. Ultimately the northern one third of the island was left under Turkish Cypriot administration, United Nation troops patrolled and protected what became known as the Green Line or Dead Zone which runs across the island, and the capital Nicosia gained the distinction of being the last divided capital in Europe.

Separation was followed in 1983 with the annexing of the north of the island and the establishment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) unrecognized as an independent state by the United Nations or the European Union. Though tension remained high through the eighties and nineties, the physical separation of the two communities meant there were limited episodes of conflict. In April 2003, the border between the north and south parts of the island was opened to civilians for the first time since the 1974 invasion. In April 2004, just before entering the European Union, a referendum on the creation of a bi-zonal, federal, bi-communal state outlined by the UN known as the Annan Plan was rejected by 76% of Greek Cypriots while it was accepted by 66% of Turkish Cypriots. Following the referendum the Republic of Cyprus entered the European Union independent of the TRNC, and reconciliation talks between the two sides continue.

The catastrophic invasion and continued separation of the island have left their mark on the identity and psyche of the Cypriot people. What has become known as the ‘Cyprus Problem’ has been and continues to be a rallying point for a national obsession with victimization, propaganda against the ‘other side’ and an overwhelming sense of injustice. The result has been the creation of a psyche of distrust, suspicion and in many cases malice which permeate life for many everyday citizens on both sides of the divide.

## 2.2 The Minorities of Cyprus

### 2.2.1 Traditional Minority Groups

Most representations of Cyprus, whether historical or contemporary, present the island as purely bi-communal, encompassing the Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities only. However Cyprus is a multicultural country (Angelides, Stylianou & Leigh, 2003) with many traditional minority groups (See Varnava, *et al.*, 2009). Three indigenous minority groups are represented in Cyprus; the Maronites 4,800 or 0.7% of total population, Latin's 900 or 0.1% of total population and Armenians, 2,600 or 0.4% of total population (Spinthourakis *et al.*, 2008) and approximately 2,000 – 2,500 Cypriot Roma over whose numbers there is debate (Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2009, p 243); however, this diversity has not often been well reflected in policy and politics.

There are several reasons why these minority groups are often overlooked. First, under the constitution, several of these groups are listed solely as religious groups, and although they maintain the right to their own educational and cultural institutions they are as such documented as belonging to either the Turkish Cypriot community, as is the case with the Roma, or the Greek Cypriot community as is the case with the Armenian, Maronite and Latin communities (Karyolemou, 2009, p 325). Members of these minority communities have experienced different treatment under the law, for example, members of the Armenian and Maronite communities were until recently exempt from national military service. Additionally, separate state funded schools are provided for them such as the Saint Maron Elementary School in Nicosia which is Maronite. The result is that within state education the presence of traditional minority students has been limited.

### 2.2.2 The English Speaking Community

It is also necessary to note that though not afforded status under the constitution, there is a discrete English language community on the island. However unlike the traditional minority groups discussed above, this group is not perceived as having a clear claim or connection to the island, and as a result is often seen as composed solely of expatriates, retirees and new immigrants. The absence of a definitive historical English speaking community presence in Cyprus is interesting, as in a post-colonial context it is common to find existing communities of colonial descendants who are incorporated as part of the fibre of the society in ex-colonies. The lack of this community in Cyprus may be the result of several factors. First the establishment of the British bases on the island likely assimilated much of the British population during ‘the troubles’ and after independence. Second, Cyprus was for much of its colonial history considered a backwater (Morgan, 2009), lacking in any great trading families and any of the ideas of the traditional colony - as a place where fortunes could be made and pagan souls saved. Finally, there is no doubt that the inter-communal conflict of the sixties and subsequent invasion in 1974 resulted in many families who could return to the homeland leaving Cyprus.

### 2.3 The English Language in Cyprus

The historical context created means that, unlike many other ex-colonies, Cyprus does not present a clearly defined, distinct or traditional English speaking community. However, even without this community and while not recognized as an official language, English plays an important role on the island (See Papapavlou, 1997 and Mcintee-Atalianis, 2004 for a complete discussion of the role of the English language in Cyprus). In addition although it has at times been associated with the negative undertones of colonialism (Karoulla-Vrikki 1991, 2004) in recent years English has been characterized as a *lingua franca* within the local context (Mcintee-Atalianis, 2004) and is considered the preferred second language of Cypriots (Papapavlou, 1997). The

Language Policy Profile on Cyprus characterizes English as neither English as a Second Language nor English as a foreign language and contends that although it is “likely more English is being used in Cyprus today than at any other time” (Language Policy Division Strasbourg & Ministry of Education and Culture Cyprus, 2003 - 2005, p 16) the influence of English on the island has diminished as increasingly, official documents are being translated into and produced in Greek. Though the official use of English may be on the decline in Cyprus, the report acknowledges there is considerable use of the language for both in and out group communication (*op. cit.*).

Undoubtedly similar to the wider European context where knowledge of English is associated with mobility, material gain and higher societal status (Hoffman, 2000) English although criticized for its prevalence (Karoulla-Vrikkis 1991, 2004), also enjoys a high status in Cyprus. Indeed there is considerable anecdotal use of the language within the society where there are, for example, two local English language newspapers, the local news is broadcast in English on the national television channel, and there are a substantial number of private English language nurseries, elementary and secondary schools and universities.

The Cyprus Language Education Policy Profile (2003 - 2005) characterizes English in Cyprus as below:

“English is very prominent in Cyprus. It has been compulsory in schools for decades and is therefore not really in competition with other foreign languages. English as a ‘second language’ has a major role in Cypriot society (to be distinguished from the term ‘Second Foreign Language’ in the school curriculum.” (p 16)



Moreover the report continues:

“It is estimated that more English is used in Cyprus today than at any other previous time. Some government reports continue to be written in English and a significant proportion of official and legal documents still only exist in English Text. English is omnipresent in everyday life, through media (TV – films in original version, music, publicity etc.), tourism (50% of tourists are native speakers of English) and the influence of global American culture. English operates as a *lingua franca* for ‘out group’ communication for migrant groups of non-Greek-speaking background and for tourists.” (*op cit.*, p 16)

## 2.4 The Cypriot Education System

### 2.4.1 The History of the Cyprus Educational System

Unlike many other colonies, the influence of the British colonial rulers on educational form and content was limited in Cyprus, particularly in the early years of colonization. The result was education developed along separate religious lines and community schools remained Orthodox and Muslim respectively (Morgan, 2009). In fact this lack of influence was so entrenched that later attempts by the colonial powers to assert power over the educational system were met with heavy resistance and assertions that these efforts constituted attempts to dehellenize students; an interesting accusation given that Cyprus was a British colony at the time. Throughout the 1930s until independence in 1960 Cypriot schools transformed into settings for dissension heavily influenced by both the Church and EOKA (Greek Cypriot resistance fighters). During this period schools actively resisted attempts to remove any Greek content from the curriculum, and many students, particularly within the larger towns like those at the PanCyprian Gymnasium in Nicosia, were converted into ‘soldiers’ for the independence movement as they joined in support of EOKA and *enosis*.

The result was that education became what has been characterized as ‘co-opted’ by the national struggle for union with Greece, and in this way resistant to any attempts to create a common national Cypriot identity enjoyed by both Greek and Turkish Cypriots (Bryant, 2006). According to Bryant within education there developed a sense of one truth, one way of being a Greek Cypriot and that this entailed support for union with Greece, which resulted in “blindness” to any other history than that which made Cyprus Greek (Bryant, 2006 pp168 & 170). Bryant posits that students were faced with “choicelessness” where education took over all aspects of their lives and dictated what it meant to be a good citizen, which was a good ‘Greek’ Cypriot. In reference to the overwhelming influence of EOKA and the Church on education she suggests that this “training in blindness is one way in which the paradox of a “taught” ethnicity is resolved, and in the Greek Cypriot case this is most often done by an exclusion of other histories, which makes one’s own history inevitable” (Bryant, 2006, p171). As a result the conviction that Cyprus was and always had been ‘Greek’ overwhelmed any debate on independence for the sake of freedom and according to Bryant the result was that independence for Greek Cypriots became exclusively about *enosis*. Thus in the struggle for Cypriot independence educational institutions played an integral role in disseminating an identity construct not of the good Cypriot citizen; but rather; of the Good Greek citizen one which I would contend is still predominant today.

#### 2.4.2 Nationalism in Cypriot Education Today

Today the Cypriot educational system is under the control of the Ministry of Education and Culture (hereafter the MoEC) which is responsible to oversee the curriculum, train and post teachers for all schools. An educational system where the curriculum has been characterized as heavily hellenocentric, nationalistic, ethnocentric and xenophobic (Spyrou, 2000, 2001, 2006; Bryant, 2004; Trimikliniotis, 2004; EUMC, 2006; Papadakis, 2008). This nationalist rhetoric is focused on socializing students into a school experience which has been accused of emphasizing the Greek historical context

as parallel to modern Cypriot history. Consequently, Cypriot school children celebrate a large variety of Greek National holidays such as March the 25<sup>th</sup>, the uprising of the Greeks against the Ottoman Empire in 1821 (the Greek National Day) and October 28<sup>th</sup>, Oxi Day, the day the Greek government refused the German Italian alliance access to Africa through Greece during the Second World War. These types of remembrances are often compressed with references to the continuing victimization experienced in Cyprus at the hands of the Turks, and reinforce the general idea of Cyprus and Greece having a shared history. Additionally national days such as April 1<sup>st</sup> (EOKA Day), celebrated to remember the rebellions against the British colonial occupiers, are often solemn occasions in Cypriot schools where it is not uncommon to find children with toy rifles in hand involved in the re-enactments of the murder of national heroes at the hands of the British. Furthermore, national parades where students march alongside the military, well-orchestrated student demonstrations against the occupation staged by nationalistic political parties and their youth organizations, and a highly politicized school curriculum can all be regarded as part of the fabric of student life in Cyprus. Children in state education are repeatedly exposed to slogans such as “Δεν ξεχνώ” - I don’t forget – written for example underneath pictures from the ‘occupied’ areas on the front of government issued exercise books at elementary school (Appendix 1). In addition, images of Cyprus and Cypriots as victims are not uncommon on posters and stickers in school classrooms, the Greek flag is flown alongside the Cypriot one at schools, emphasis has been placed on speaking ‘proper’ Greek as opposed the local dialect of Cypriot, children’s textbooks are often sourced from Greece and the national anthem sung at school is the Greek.

As a result, the educational system assumes an active role in disseminating a particular view of Cyprus as ‘Greek’ and Cypriots as ‘Greek’. Consequently students who do not fully conform to this idea, such as the children in this study who enter school with two national or ethnic identity backgrounds, will be placed in a position where they may struggle to maintain or manufacture a sense of belonging so as not to be marginalized by their peers. An additional consequence of the positioning of Cyprus as Greek is the

hyphenated identity construct in Cyprus where it is not enough or usual to define oneself as ‘Cypriot’ but rather one refers to oneself as hyphenated distinguishing the type of Cypriot – as in Greek-Cypriot, Turkish-Cypriot, Armenian-Cypriot. This hyphenation was relevant within the study as during the interviews terms such as Greek-Cypriot, Greek or Cypriot were used to refer to ‘being Cypriot’ and Cypriot-American, Greek-American, Greek-English were used at other times to emphasis the children’s dual national or linguistic communities (See also Section 7.2.1.1).

The role of education in the development of nationalism is, as both Bourdieu, (1991) and Gellner, (2006) contend, a common one. Indeed individuals are often indoctrinated into a commitment to this “imagined community” (Anderson, 1991) through common language, religion, history, ethnicity and culture and it would be fair to assert that for the nation state to succeed a certain amount of nationalism is actually ‘needed’. This process is viewed as particularly important in the effort to safeguard citizen’s development of feelings of national pride, belonging and connection to the state; considered fundamental to secure the continuation of the nation itself. In Cyprus, education is one means of creating citizens who have been socialized into the national debate of the Cyprus Problem, and have been infused with a national identity of what it means to be a ‘Cypriot’, correspondingly ‘Greek Cypriot’. Within this process there are two important issues which need addressing: first Cypriot identity which can be regarded as a contested space and second, the role of children’s agency in how identity is experienced. Both of these points are discussed in the next section.

#### 2.4.2.1 Cypriot Identity

National identification in Cyprus varies substantially between political parties. Consequently, while it is not uncommon for the educational policy of a country to shift with a change in government, in Cyprus this change often involves shifts in the conceptualization of identity and position on the history of the island. This change is

evident within the school context in terms of directives and policies on the teaching of history, the role of Greek Cypriot dialect and increased or reduced involvement in bi-communal projects and initiatives, the position on which is influenced by which party is in power. Presently Cyprus is governed by the AKEL (communist) party which is described as supporting a ‘civic nationalism’ which places focus on the commonalities of the Cypriot people, (ο λαός) as opposed an ‘ethnic nationalism’ supported by the more right wing parties (DIKO, DISI) which emphasize an ethnic or ‘ethnos’ within the Greek nation where all Greeks by virtue of their blood ties should be reunited (Peristianis, 2006, p.102). As such under the present government there have been a series of educational reforms which have at the very least opened debates on the content of history teaching, the role of textbooks from Greece in local education and the concept of increased bi-communal contact. Certainly shifts in government often result in changes in educational policy, indeed education is often a platform for election or re-election. The difference in the Cypriot context is that this shift is not focused on examination reform, teachers’ pay or school funding but rather it is captivated by the concept of identity in a fight for the country’s youth.

#### 2.4.2.2 Cypriot Identity and Children’s Agency

Secondly though the school system and the incumbent government have worked to present a particular account of the national issue and identity, children are not purely sponges who soak up the context they are immersed in without meaning and understanding (James and Prout, 1997, 1990; James, Jenks and Prout, 1998). On the contrary they are active agents in interpreting and understanding their worlds. As such Cypriot children are dynamically involved in creating and interpreting their social and cultural context (Spyrou 2000, 2001, and 2006). As a result, children’s identities are part of a “reciprocal relationship” of power where a variety of differences and meanings will be negotiated so there is a “dynamic play” between the social, historical, political, ideological, cultural, personal and the child (Spyrou, 2006, pp. 133 & 136).

## 2.5 New Minorities and Education

Though state schools have traditionally been homogeneous, over the last fifteen years the Cypriot demographics have changed as new minority groups establish themselves in Cyprus and now constitute 21% of the total population of Cyprus (Statistical Services, 2012). New minority groups do not share the homogeneity of indigenous minority groups, with new immigrants coming from the European bloc, ex-Soviet Union countries and a large number of semi-migrant workers from the Philippines, Sri Lanka, India and Syria. Approximately 62% of these new immigrants are from other EU member states with the others being third country nationals (nationals from outside the Union). Statistics on foreign pupils by nationality for 2004/2005 indicated that five per cent of students at primary level held another nationality (Statistical Services); while the Annual Report for 2011 indicates approximately 12 % of children entering school do not speak Greek as a first language (Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture, 2011, p. 357), an increase of almost 100% since 2007 when approximately 7% of children did not speak Greek as a first language. Children born in Cyprus and have who have one Greek Cypriot parent are usually classified as Cypriot and consequently assumed to be native Greek speakers, regardless of the effect or predominance of another language. This definition may have been influenced by the constitution which traditionally defines children on the basis of the community to which their father belongs:

(b) a male or female child under the age of twenty-one who is not married shall belong to the Community to which his or her father belongs, or, if the father is unknown and he or she has not been adopted, to the Community to which his or her mother belongs. (Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, Appendix 2,7b accessed 2007).

Consequently statistics demonstrated through the MoEC Annual Reports for non-Greek speaking children entering dimottico do not appear to account for simultaneous

bilingual children or children from mixed heritage backgrounds where the father or mother is not Greek Cypriot. Consequently it is likely that the number of bilingual speakers in schools is much higher than these statistics indicate.

### 2.5.1 Bilingual Students in Cypriot Primary Schools

Unfortunately, there are no statistics available on the number of bilingual/bicultural students in Cypriot schools as the definition used by the MoEC for ‘other language speakers’ – δίγλωσσα (diglossia) applies to children who hold another nationality (MoEC, Annual Report, 2005). The use of the term δίγλωσσα in referring to bilingual speakers is interesting as it has been officially translated as “other language speakers” rather than a more direct translation of two-language or bilingual speaker. This situation could be viewed as analogous to the French one outlined by Helot and Young (2002 & 2005) where the term bilingual is not used to refer to immigrant speakers of other languages as it contains positive connotations reserved for the acquisition of languages in mainstream European programs (Helot and Young, 2002, p 97).

With regard bilingual education there is no definitive bilingual education program in Cyprus. Consequently, the MoEC’s approach to the language needs of all “other language speakers” is one of linguistic mainstreaming where non-Greek speaking children are placed into classes alongside Greek speakers and the MoEC has made available material on teaching Greek as a foreign language (MoEC, Annual Report, 2011, p 358). Mainstreaming or submersion bilingual education programs as defined by Baker (2006, p 215) are usually assimilation or subtractive programs where the language minority child is submerged in the majority language classroom with the eventual outcome being monolingualism in the target language (See also Section 3.4.1). In Cyprus, such students are offered the opportunity to enrol in afternoon classes for the enrichment of their Greek language skills. Specific Greek as a Second Language classes are only offered within the curriculum in schools where there is a predominance of non-

Greek speakers. Currently there is no programme of heritage language maintenance available and, indeed, the objective of the MoEC regarding non-Greek speaker is made clear in the statement:

“Multicultural education is currently being practised in Cyprus in the form of various support measures. These measures can be categorised as measures for language support, which refer to the learning of Greek as a second language and measures for facilitating the smooth integration of groups with different cultural identities. The model that is currently being used is the mainstreaming programme, in which bilingual pupils participate in the classrooms along with the native Greek-speaking pupils.” (MoEC, Annual Report, 2010, p 328, MoEC, Annual Report 2011, p 357)

The result is that there is little to no recognition of bilingual education or bilingualism within the Cypriot school system. Children are expected and encouraged to move through their first language into speaking Greek in what would be considered an assimilation program (Language Policy Profile, 2003 - 2005, p 19 & 28, Zembylas and Lesta, 2011). An assimilation approach such as this is designed to move learners through the culture and language they enter school with, into the dominant one.

This focus on assimilation may be the reason why, beyond discussions over the dyglossic issue experienced by Greek Cypriot children entering school speaking the Greek Cypriot Dialect and being schooled in Standard Modern Greek, there is such a limited literature on bilingual children in Cyprus (see Ioannidou, 2009 & Papapavlou, 2004 for discussion on using GCD in the classroom). The main study available on bilinguals in Cyprus is by Papapavlou (1999) which though valuable in providing preliminary insight into the existence of this group, and for acknowledging further work should be conducted on “attitudes towards the home language, the use of the home language and the development of self-esteem” (Papapavlou, 1999, p 263) is limited in expanding our understanding of this group for several reasons. First, the study



employed the use of standardized questionnaires which used a five point scale to measure the linguistic and school integration of the children. While a quantitative approach such as this is not necessarily an issue, the study does not outline any accommodation to the interview process which one would normally expect when conducting surveys with children (Scott, 2000). Secondly, the study does not consider the type of bilingual child, assuming instead that all bilingual children are the same and will therefore experience equal levels of language use - akin to the idea of two people in one. Consequently the study examines simultaneous and sequential bilinguals, bilingual immigrant children who may be second language learners, children from mixed marriages born and raised in Cyprus and the children of repatriated Cypriots as one group of children (See Section 3.3 for types of bilingualism). The differences of language uses between these groups would be a significant factor to consider in examining their educational profile as the children undoubtedly experience differences in their fluency, domains of use and levels of integration in society all of which will affect school success. For example, children of repatriated Cypriots often have extended families in Cyprus with Cypriot grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins within the community, are often physically indistinguishable from local Cypriot children, have Greek names, are usually Christian-Orthodox, and are frequently raised using both Greek and English at home where Greek may be the predominant language. All of these differences serve as significant social markers in Cypriot society and would allow this group to be more readily accepted into the society than for example the children of immigrants (See Trimikliniotis, 2004). Additionally the language fluency and domains for this group of children would likely be quite different from those of another type of bilingual child, such as those in this study.

Though Papapavlou's study is important as one of the first studies into this group in Cyprus; it minimizes differences between bilinguals by limiting itself to examining children who speak two languages without exploring the context in which they use these languages. Ultimately it applies a definition of a bilingual as a person who speaks two languages without accounting for the unique context and situation of language use.

This oversimplifies the situation for bilinguals in Cypriot schools. This is because applying such a definition means that where difference has given rise to an inequality we are deeming it acceptable to treat those who are unlike as alike something which Young (1990) cautions us against. Ultimately, the Greek-English speaking children in this study are members of a larger group of bilinguals in Cyprus; nevertheless, it is important that we do not view them in a simplistic holistic manner as that would serve to limit the insight we can gain into their unique experiences of elementary school in Cyprus. As a result, Papapavlou's conclusion that;

“It may be argued, on the basis of the obtained results, that the recent situation in Cyprus does not present any alarming concerns to the educational authorities of Cyprus since the bilingual children enrolled in Greek schools seem to adjust well to their new environment and interact with the majority children. Their overall academic achievement and proficiency in Greek is comparable to that of monolingual speakers.”(1999, p 263) is misleading.

Papapavlou's study is valuable in providing insight into this group, but drawing conclusions about the status of language abilities and needs of such large and variable groups on the basis of this study would be disingenuous. This is because by applying a broad definition of the bilingual child and adopting the methodology is has the study cannot truly provide clear insight into the language needs of the children (See Section 3.3.2 for a definition of the bilingual). Ultimately the study fails to account for difference and variance in the experiences of bilingual children in state elementary school in Cyprus which limits the value of its findings.

## 2.6 New Developments in the Position of Immigrants in Cyprus

Important to the positioning of bilingual students at school are the recent changes which have taken place in Cyprus. First the MoEC has increased its efforts to provide multicultural education. Though it has been criticized in these efforts (Zembylas,

2010a) they constitute a starting point for a further discussion on the needs on bilingual and non-Cypriot students at school. One part of this effort has been the plan to produce induction guides in the most common languages other than Greek spoken indicating that currently the main other nationalities at school are, English, Russian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Georgian, Ukrainian and Arabic (MoEC, Annual Report, 2011).

Another important change is the newly emerging problem with the economy particularly impacted by the global financial crisis, and the debt crisis in Greece which have left Cyprus vulnerable. This vulnerability added to a history of nationalism and a resistive social structure, defined by over forty years of political inability to reconcile the Cyprus Problem, has been complicated by the requirements of European Union status, for example, Cyprus is ranked first, alongside Malta, for asylum seekers applications per capita, (UNHCR, 2011 p 10) and this combination of events has led to an explosion of negative rhetoric towards immigrants and others from politicians, rightwing parties and the press. Though predominantly focused on third country nationals this negative atmosphere has been felt by all immigrants settled in Cyprus whether legal/illegal immigrants, seasonal workers, or refugees. The anti-immigrant sentiment has manifested itself in the creation of the first anti-immigrant Greek Cypriot fascist group ELAM (The People's National Front), whose youth organization has in recent months had gangs of young men dressed in black roaming the streets of Nicosia, often in heavily immigrant areas, distributing anti-immigrant leaflets. The group has also been accused of being behind random attacks on immigrants, English speaking Cypriots - deemed foreign, and those who verbalized opposition to their views.

Simultaneously, there has been an increase in anti-immigrant sentiment within education with debates in the parliament advocating the cessation of free snack programs for the children of refugees, along with several incidents of aggression against foreign students at state high schools. The worst of the recent violent incidents was at the Vergina High School in Larnaca where over one hundred Greek Cypriot students set upon a group of approximately twenty Arabic speaking students, predominately

Palestinian refugees, resulting in the police having to be called to secure the safety of the foreign children. The Greek Cypriot students claimed they were provoked on a daily basis by the Palestinian students whom they characterized as violent and as treated with favoritism by the school system.

### 2.6.1 Colour Blind and Difference Blindness Theory and New Minorities in Cyprus.

In examining teachers' perceptions of the integration of immigrant children in Cyprus, Theodorou (2010) drew from whiteness studies to explore the role she suggests colour-blindness theory plays in how teachers' perceptions of immigrant children are moulded in the Cypriot context. Colour-blind ideology explores a form of modern day racism which seeks to deny the influence of race, class and white privilege on success (DeCuir – Gunby, 2007) focusing instead on ideas of equalitarianism, individualism and meritocracy as the explanation for any inequalities (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Theodorou theorizes the influence of race as problematic within the Cypriot context, as it is a society where there is a “monoracial yet multiethnic and multicultural social context(s)” (2010, p 5), consequently she expands the notion of colour-blindness to that of difference-blindness (Larson and Ovando, 2001). Theodorou posits a construction of difference blindness with “the theories used in studies of whiteness as having relevancy not only in multiracial settings, but also in predominantly monoracial yet multiethnic and multicultural social contexts as well” (*op. cit*). She uses difference-blindness as a theoretical tool through which to examine racist and stereotypical attitudes towards immigrant and minority students in Cypriot primary school. Thus difference-blindness in the Cypriot context examines how social stratification in Greek-Cypriot schools has been established in accordance with cultural, linguistic and ethnic differences between native and immigrant groups (Theodorou, 2010, p 7) rather than on the basis of overt racial characteristics.

Theodorou's conclusion emphasizes a process of 'othering' within schools which leads to stratification much like the racialization of non-white groups in North American literature (Lewis, 2001). She contends that within the Cypriot context there is an inferior social status assigned to the label of foreigner, thereby allowing the dominant group to create an 'othering' which rather than based on racial characteristics, is founded on ethnic background and native tongue. In her view the application of difference-blindness allows Cypriot teachers and students to perceive an integrated and equitable educational environment within school environments where non-Cypriots face significant exclusion. The significance of this finding is that it demonstrates that in the Cypriot context racialization is not necessarily a process of ascribing attributes to external markers of groups; but is rather, a reflection of the power dynamics at play within a particular environment while at the same time mirroring societal attitudes towards others (Theodorou, 2010; Barajas and Ronnkvist, 2007).

## 2.7 Chapter Summary

Unquestionably the educational system in Cyprus is intricately interwoven with issues of racism, xenophobia, nationalism and exclusion. Added to this the country has undergone rapid changes since independence in 1960 and the subsequent invasion in 1974. Unresolved events like the 'Cyprus Problem' have created an environment where there is a unique positioning of 'others'. As we shall see in Chapter Seven issues of nationalism, identity, a limited understandings of bilingual and bilingualism and the political atmosphere of the country are interwoven into the experiences of the Greek-English speaking children involved in this study. Having examined the specific context of Cyprus I now move on to Chapter Three which explores literature relevant to the study on schooling, bilingualism, race identity and language and identity.

## Chapter Three: The Literature: schools, bilingualism, language and identity

“A society’s culture is, perhaps, its most precious gift to its young. . . the schools major function is to transmit this precious and necessary heritage to the young.”

(Ryan and Cooper, 1980, p 237)

### 3.0 Introduction

In an effort to illuminate the experiences of language and identity of these bilingual students in state elementary school in Cyprus, it has been essential to position this research within its specific context, by exploring relevant aspects of the local setting as considered in the previous chapter. In addition to situating the study within the local context it is vital that the study is placed within the pertinent literature on language, identity and school experience as these elements will inform the findings. The current chapter seeks to address this concern by providing a review of relevant literature in several areas. The first section considers literature on schools and schooling, including a brief examination of the politics and purpose of education, and schools. The section continues by looking at the social world of the school, particularly the lack of student voice in studies of schools, as well as school culture and subcultures. The next part surveys the literature on bilingualism by investigating the definitions of the bilingual and contemporary understandings of bilingualism. The section continues by exploring bilingual development in children and bilingualism in schools. The final portion of the chapter examines the literature of identity, beginning with an investigation of the relationship between the self and others and the self and context, it then continues with an analysis of the relationships between, multiple, shifting and new identities as well as group membership identities. The chapter carries on with an extrapolation on the relationship between language and identity from a post-modern perspective. Finally it concludes by exploring the identity construction within the Cypriot context and the role of colour blind theory in identity expressions in Cypriot schools.

### 3.1 The Politics and Purpose of Education

Central to understanding the school experiences of these Greek-English speaking bilingual children will be an understanding of school itself, particularly as the study explores the children's experiences of language and identity within school. Consequently the purpose of schools will be examined in an attempt to establish what is referred to when we are discussing schools. The question of what a school is appears fundamental, but as Ryan and Cooper (2010) put forth, 'school' is unremarkable; it is the physical location where schooling takes place. They state the following "the school is created for the express purpose of providing a certain type of educational experience called the curriculum" (Ryan and Cooper, 2010, p 29). However, we must also consider that "Much of what we are – intellectually, socially and emotionally – can be traced to our experiences in school." (Ryan and Cooper, 2010, p 65), consequently the importance of understanding the 'purpose of school' is pertinent. Schools have several purposes including, but not limited to, the transmission of culture, the passing on of customs, social patterns and values of the dominate group of society and the development of human potential. Hence, schools are entities involved in educational experience and as such the query over the purpose of schools is really one over the purpose of education.

#### 3.1.1 The Purpose of Education

Perhaps surprisingly, the purpose of education has been debated since before the time of the ancient Greeks, yet it is still difficult to provide a definitive explanation of the purpose of education. This is because ultimately any definition will depend on the political and philosophical stance of the questioner. Indeed Vadeboncoeur (1997) notes that throughout the twentieth century, there were two competing views on the purpose

of education. Vadeboncoeur refers to the Piagetian focus of education where the structure of the mind is the source of the understanding of the world, and where culture and social context have a limited role. She views this approach as aligning itself with the belief that the purpose of education is to work towards the cognitive development of the individual child. The second view has a more Vygotskian focus and places its emphasis on the development of the child, and the cultural and situational influences on the growth of the child which are in turn influenced and moulded by national and historical development (See Vadeboncoeur, 1997). Thus this second approach emphasizes the concept of education as working towards social transformation and reconstruction. Certainly education is about the cognitive development of children; however, without the social and cultural context in place such an education is limited. Ultimately when children enter the educational system they are influenced in many more spheres than simply the cognitive. Consequently, education has to be concerned with socialization, alteration, change and conversion. The issue which remains is how these aims are achieved.

#### 3.1.1.1 Power in and over Education

Perhaps Dewey (1916) articulates the purpose of education most successfully when he affirmed that while all education is about socialization, the quality and value provided will vary as these are determined by the goals and aims of those providing the education (Dewey, 1916, p 83). Bernstein (1971, in Sadovnik, 1995, p 213) acknowledges that even how a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates educational knowledge to the public is an act of political and social, power and control. Likewise Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), and Jenkins (2002), advance the notion that pedagogic action (education) is a reflection of the interests of the dominant classes, and as such the purpose of education is the uneven distribution of cultural capital among groups, ultimately resulting in the reproduction of the current social structure (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, Jenkins, 2002, p 105). Apple (2003, 2000) reminds us that education is



always part of a larger social context and is therefore contested ground where ideological conflict takes place. This type of conflict will be compounded in settings such as Cyprus where, added to the interests of dominant classes and social capital disputes in education, there is conflict over interpretations of history and the outstanding political issue of the 'Cyprus Problem'. Issues such as these make education an even more contested space where political agendas are thrashed out in the debate over who decides and whose knowledge will be implemented. Such a struggle is evident in the debates over changes to history textbooks used in Cypriot schools (Papadakis, 2008a & 2008b).

If education is viewed as a result of larger societal influences which interpret, represent and signify what those in power consider knowledge, then education is clearly an arena of ideological conflict. This conflict will in turn be influenced by a variety of societal groups all wielding their power in an attempt to establish what society considers legitimate (Apple, 2000). In recognizing the struggle for power in education, Hogan (1982) argues that less powerful groups must respond by using education as a means of mobilization. Similarly Freire (1972) advocates for education's main purpose to be to facilitate the fight to improve human existence, and as such education has a responsibility to embrace disenfranchised groups and to actively work towards unshackling oppressed peoples.

There is certainly considerable importance within the ideas forwarded by Apple, Freire, and Hogan on the use of education by the oppressed to bring about change; however, in order for this to occur, there must first be the recognition of a need for change by these oppressed groups. Without this recognition, it is not possible for groups to seize the power of education for change. Unfortunately this recognition is often difficult to attain precisely because of the way society transmits educational knowledge which is, in and of itself, an act of power and social control (Bernstein, 1971 in Sadovnik, 1995). Consequently the people for whom education should advocate are often so disenfranchised that they have no means of challenging or changing education. Corson

(1999) proposes this is frequently because within education, the cultural capital of groups who are not valued is commonly left out of this reproductive process, with the result that over time this cultural capital fades away; the outcome is that marginal groups lose their identity and cohesion and thereby become even more marginalized.

### 3.1.1.2 Disenfranchised Groups and Education

Minority groups are marginalized and disenfranchised through a process of a lack of recognition within education systems. This is realized through the pedagogic authority of the state, which perpetuates the illusion that education is a legitimate, value free, disinterested and neutral process while at the same time executing the agenda of the majority group and working to keep minority groups mollified. The result is that “the social and capital reproduction” of the society continues generally unchallenged (Jenkins, 2002, p 109). Bourdieu refers to this as the illusion of “symbolic violence,” where symbolism and meaning are imposed on groups in such a way that the groups experience them as legitimate. As a result, “symbolic violence” is achieved through a process of misrecognition where the decision- making mechanisms which determine the validity of knowledge, both what and whose knowledge, are purified and legitimized in the eyes of the public. As a result, minority groups do not seek to change or challenge the *status quo*. Cummins discusses a “macrointeraction of educational structure” where schools and school policies are designed to reproduce the relations of power of the broader society, and to achieve goals defined by the dominant group (Cummins, 1995, p 197). He describes this “macrointeraction” as particularly problematic when there is a cultural mismatch between minority and majority groups. He contends that when this mismatch occurs, the result will be the development of coercive relationships of power where minority groups are dominated by the majority, eroding the identity and cohesion for the minority group. Within this thesis, I argue that this cultural mismatch and “macrointeraction of educational structure” influence the experiences of this group of bilingual children in Cypriot primary schools.

Consequently what surfaces is the understanding that education as a function of society is fundamentally about conflict, as minority and majority groups struggle to implement their respective agendas. Thus education cannot be viewed as uninfluenced, neutral or value free. Education is not primarily about fact and simple truth, but rather about the interpretation, influence and truth of those who hold positions of power.

The recognition of education as a political act of power, where majority politics, culture and beliefs will impact and often overwhelm that of minority groups, has particular relevance in Cyprus, where the goals and aims of education determined by the Ministry of Education and Culture have been characterized as heavily nationalistic, xenophobic and ethnocentric (See Context Chapter 2.4.2 – Nationalism in Cypriot Education). Of even greater significance is how this competition over power within education will be influenced by context. This power is context specific as within each setting in and out groups will vary, so those who may have access to power and legitimacy within one context may not have this access in another. In Cyprus the dominant ideas of education are implemented by the Greek Cypriot majority, influenced by shifts in the political party in power. Ultimately, however the agenda of education in Cyprus focuses greatly on the assimilation of minority groups because of what Cummins has discussed as a “macrointeraction” where there is the presentation of one truth in education – the Greek Cypriot truth. This construct of education and the fight for power influences the experiences of all children in Cypriot education but most certainly has a significant role to play for the bilingual children in this study children who in another context might not be considered a minority but who it can be argued constitute an ‘out group’ in terms of educational policy and power in the specific context of Cyprus. Thus in exploring the data generated for this investigation, issues of power, assimilation, nationalism, xenophobia and macrointeraction were all considered to play a part in constructing the social background of the study.

## 3.2 Children and Primary Schooling

### 3.2.1 Student Voice in Research on Schools

While understanding the theoretical and philosophical influences on education which affect the context of this work it is equally important that consideration is given to the literature on the experiences of children in primary schools. This next section explores literature on school with particular focus on its culture, sub-cultures in schools, and the social worlds of schools, as well as on students' roles there. Understanding these aspects of school experience is imperative to interpreting the research as its purpose is to examine bilingual children's experiences within the educational setting.

Although, as we have seen in the previous section on the politics of education, there has been significant discussion of the politics and dynamics of schools relative to the purpose of education; the issue of how children understand school has not been as thoroughly considered in the literature. This dearth may be influenced by the hegemonic approach to education imposed through the state by the majority, which has for years viewed children solely as recipients rather than active agents in the educational process.

In his ground-breaking contribution to the field of school experience, Thiesen (2007) points out the literature deficiency when he asserts a review of the literature on school experience reveals that:

“For the most part, however, the findings from this research are not derived from a close examination of the daily experiences of children in elementary and secondary schools. The unique conditions of life in classrooms are not taken into account. The views of children as they are formed within the changing complexities of their everyday world at school are not always or fully explored.”  
(Thiessen, 2007, p 4)

He continues stating:

“While the wider literature on studies of children has clearly made important contributions to our knowledge of children, this research has not consistently offered constructs that enhance our understanding of how children make sense of and engage in their lives as students.” (Thiessen, 2007, p 4)

This lack of student voice in studies of school experience is echoed by Erickson and Shultz, who state:

“If the student is visible at all in a research study she is usually viewed from the perspective of adult educator’s interests and ways of seeing, that is, as failing, succeeding, motivated, mastering, unmotivated, responding, or having a misconception. Rarely is the perspective of the student herself explored.” (Erickson and Shultz 1992 in Thiessen, 2007, p 74)

Robinson and Fielding (2007) acknowledge that researchers such as Fielding (2001), and Rudduck and Flutter (2004, 2000) have worked towards encouraging more emphasis and focus on student voice and participation in school experience, but they suggest that still more needs to be done in including student perspectives (Robinson and Fielding, 2007). One reason given for the lack of research on students’ perceptions and understandings of schooling may have been the negative influence of Piaget’s concepts of students’ cognitive abilities functioning to predetermine school success (Pollard, 1999), which led to students being viewed predominantly as divorced from their social contexts. This focus on the predetermined nature of students’ cognitive abilities began to shift with the spread of Vygotsky’s ideas. His ideas refuted the concept that cognitive ability and motivation predetermine student success, and allowed educators to view them as one part of a complex puzzle which is the learner (Pollard and Filer, 1999, p 14). In response to this, educators and researchers began to explore the individual components of students which include their social, educational, familiar, linguistic and

personal backgrounds, all of which had become apparent as pieces of the educational puzzle. Apple affirms this idea of the student being more than largely predetermined cognitive components when he states,

“We do not confront abstract learners in schools. Instead we see specific classed, raced and gendered subjects, people whose biographies are intimately linked to the economic political and ideological trajectories of their families and communities, to the political economies of their neighborhoods.” (Apple, 1988, p 5)

As such when the experiences of children in this study were examined it was necessary to include within them the social, economic, linguistic and personal backgrounds so as to draw together a more complete and complex picture of who these children are, and as much as possible to allow the children to articulate their own experiences from their own perspectives.

### 3.2.2 School Cultures

In addition to understanding the importance of the individual student within the educational system, it is also of equal importance to explore the setting the student is placed within. In this case it is the context of the school itself. In his study on school culture, Prosser (1999) delineates the difficulties in addressing schools as institutions because so much of how schools are viewed depends on the observer. He presents several levels to school culture or character, the school in society – the social, economic and political influence of schools, the generic culture of the school as an institution, and its unique culture, the idea of schools being “all the same yet different”; and the final level of the “perceived culture”, the perception of the school that is evident to others particularly those in the wider community (Prosser, 1999, pp 8 -9). According to Prosser, all of these levels coexist and perform differing functions for the school.

Consequently any examination of what school 'is' must take into account the perspective or level from which this description is taking place. For this to happen, one must understand the multifaceted and multilevel construct of the school such as demonstrated within its sub-cultures.

At this more intimate level of school culture there is often the creation of what Ball refers to as the 'micro-political perspective' of the school (Ball, 1987). Here school culture splinters into a variety of sub-cultures which, although regulated by the 'formal powers or structures of a school' are not completely fixed or unyielding. Consequently school culture at this level is open to subversion by individuals and groups because they can be influenced by factors such as friendships, cliques, gender, and the history of the group or individual (Ball, 1987). Accordingly even as schooling is political and controlled by majority groups in power it is not beyond supplementary influence, even if that pressure takes place at the micro-political level. As such the school experience of an individual will be idiosyncratic and subjective and although regulated by the larger power structures this, experience will not be static as the pupil is active in subverting and constructing within the constraints of the school environment, a facet of school experience and identity construction seen in this study and discussed later in Chapter Six.

### 3.2.2.1 The Social Worlds of Schools

Andrew Pollard's (1987) study of children and their primary schools shifts the focus off the teacher/researcher perception of what school is about onto the experience of children themselves. Pollard identified three main areas which children manage at school - the self, peer group membership and learning (Pollard, 1987, p 185). As a result children's experience of school is not one dimensional, and we recognize the child as an active agent involved in the learning experience. Additionally, Pollard's work highlights the complexity of students' lives at school. Children are not merely

learners; they are also individuals managing a variety of experiences within the school setting. Within this amalgamation of experiences children manage at school, Pollard proposes a main concern for children, is their self-image and maintenance of their dignity. He contends that for children the greatest threat to their learning, self-image and dignity is the power the teacher has over them within the classroom context where ultimately the teacher can unsettle the image that any child has of him or herself (Pollard 1987, p 165). Consequently the experience of a child though constructed and assembled through interplay between the child, and the school culture(s), will ultimately be vulnerable to the power of the teacher.

### 3.2.2.2 Children's Roles at School

In exploring this interplay of the child and the social world created within schools, three distinct peer groups were identified: Goodies, Jokers and Gangs (Pollard and Filler, 1996; Pollard, 1987). These groups are defined on the basis of the behaviour of their members and the perceptions of group members and non-group members. Loosely the groups can be seen as the well-behaved but not necessarily popular or academically successful students (Goodies); the popular, athletic and more academically successful students (Jokers) and the rougher, trouble-making, less academically successful students (Gangs). Though there is great value provided by Pollard and Filler through their insights and because of their commitment to actually talking to children, the presentation of children's social worlds at school as consisting of membership in distinct groups such as these overlooks aspects of the complexity and fluidity of children's lives. Children's agency leaves us to understand that such fixed roles oversimplify because personalities shift and change depending on a multitude of variables and contexts; just as an adult would struggle to place herself within a distinct and unchanging category at work, for example, producer, slacker, or disrupter, because we shift and change depending on a multitude of variables and contexts, so too do children in the school setting.



Pollard's work does not address what Benjamin *et al.* (2003) refer to as the struggle for power and prestige within the social world of the school. They contend that inclusion or exclusion at school is the result of negotiated terrain where the micro-cultures of children and teachers overlap and the struggle for power and prestige in turn produces moments of inclusion or exclusion for individuals be it teacher, pupil or group. Therefore Pollards' clearly defined roles on offer to children are more static and fixed than Benjamin *et al.* would recognize them to be. Indeed Benjamin *et al.* assert that within the school, students have an active role in subjectivity so they can "take up, resist and manoeuvre" (2003, p 548) around the positions and memberships available. This movement allows for more fluidity and perhaps hybridity within the roles and groups that pupils negotiate.

The movement and shift in relationship and status by students in schools is presented as a post-structural approach, a dynamic situation which relies on the subject and the context actively working to make sense of themselves and the conditions in which they find themselves (Benjamin *et al.*, 2003, p 550). This approach lets students be more aware and responsive to their context and themselves, and able and capable of responding to the changing demands of their context. Thus students are viewed as shifting and moving within the micro-cultures of their school environment and as taking on varying roles within these micro-cultures - roles such as that of 'expert knower' status described by Benjamin *et al.* which emerge when students 'access the status, authority and power of expertise'. This expertise is available to them on a private or public, local or international level and allows students to use their knowledge of school, family, community, popular culture, religion or classroom to position themselves within the school micro-culture. Benjamin *et al.* posit this more dynamic approach affords children the opportunity to exert varying statuses depending on situation and context (2003, p 553); a shifting and moving dynamism relevant to the experiences of the bilingual children in this work and discussed in Chapter Six.

Though this movement and shifting is important to our understanding of how children negotiate and experience schooling and how we view children, as either objects or actors within social context, it is equally essential that we do not overstate children's influence within educational systems. Children are certainly not static objects purely reacting to their context and lacking either the thought or ability to respond or counter. Nonetheless, the inherent purpose and structure of schools, the authority teachers wield over children with the school setting, added to the power and influence of educational systems place children in a vulnerable position within the school. Certainly they will negotiate and manoeuvre within these constraints but they are still limited. An additional factor influencing the school experience of the children in this study is the element of their bilingualism and language use at school. The next section of our discussion explores some of the relevant literature in these areas.

### 3.3 Bilingualism

“When we think of bilingual children we think of those who appear to function equally in two languages, move effortlessly between them, and adopt the appropriate sociocultural stance for each.”

(Bialystok, 2001, p 3)

#### 3.3.1 Introduction

This section discusses literature on contemporary understandings of bilinguals and bilingualism. It begins by examining contemporary definitions and continues by exploring issues such as common labels associated with bilingual learners as well as code-switching and translanguage. This is followed with a brief discussion on bilingual children and schooling. Here issues such as language maintenance, mainstreaming, social class influences on bilinguals and academic language proficiency issues are

discussed. The section ends with a discussion on education focused on bilingual children in monolingual school settings as opposed bilingual education.

### 3.3.2 Working towards a Definition on Bilingualism

Analogous to other contested spaces in language education, the application of a definitive ubiquitous and stable definition of bilingualism remains contentious; nevertheless for the purposes of this work, it is important to establish a general explanation of what is meant when referencing the bilingual speaker. At the outset the obvious definition of a bilingual would be a person with the ability to speak two languages. However, securing a definitive definition is not as simple as it may appear particularly as Bialystok (2001) reminds us it is uncommon to find a person who does not know some parts of another language, even if these are simple words and phrases used on holidays or in the pub. Such a person would nonetheless likely resist the label of bilingual. Consequently the development of a definition requires greater focus.

As this study focuses on a qualitative method and not on exploring the psychological or neurobiological processes involved in bilingualism, the definition provided will focus on a sociolinguistic perspective. As stated earlier akin to many other academic areas, the definition of bilingualism has shifted and varied based on who was doing the defining. In attempting to define bilingualism Romaine (1995) leads us through a history from definitions provided by Bloomfield, (1933) and Thiery (1978) which relied on the concept of full fluency or native - like fluency in two languages, so a true bilingual was one who would be taken for a native speaker by both linguistic communities to which she belonged. On to Haugen who regarded bilingualism as existing on a fluency continuum, to which Macnamara added the notion that even fluency in only one of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading or writing) would classify as bilingualism (Cited in Romaine, 1995, p 11 – 12). These definitions resulted

in attempts to apply degree to bilingualism, to understand 'how' bilingual a person was. As a response to this focus, a second wave of studies which looked at testing bilinguals to determine their levels of fluency began such studies attempted to establish criteria to measure linguistic competences as a means of determining levels of bilingualism. These approaches were criticized by McLaughlin, (1978) who contended that bilingualism should be assessed on a more practical basis which did not focus on 'how' bilingual a person is, but on 'why' a person is bilingual and 'what' this bilingualism is used for. The argument being made that the social context of situation and purpose of language use has to be considered (Cited in Edwards, 2004, p 17).

While acknowledging the application of context and purpose, Edwards recognizes there is also the complication of degree in determining proficiency (2004, p 8). He considers more than the four main linguistic competency areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing as fundamental to bilingualism, and asserts that if examined in a more holistic manner there are well over twenty dimensions of bilingualism which would need to be assessed in order to determine proficiency (Edwards, 2004, p 9). Indeed Edwards contends that even assessing all these different areas does not necessarily result in a complete picture of a bilingual. This is because in addition to the many linguistic categories already established, factors like age, sex, and memory would all have to be accounted for. As a result classic definitions of bilinguals and bilingualism which focused heavily on measurable competency or fluency levels have largely been replaced with newer understandings of bilingualism which are discussed next.

### 3.3.3 Contemporary Understandings of Bilingualism

More contemporary understandings of bilingualism are, as Grosjean stresses, less concerned with fluency and more with use and domain. Thus he relates perhaps the most simplistic definition of a bilingual as a person who is involved in the use of two languages regardless of measurable fluency levels (Grosjean, 1982, p 230). Fishman

(2004) emphasizes there should be more concern with when, where and with whom the language is being used than with measurable fluency levels. As a result, definitions of bilinguals became less concerned with fluency levels or measurability and more concerned with balance. So the measure of the bilingual shifted from using two languages in a variety of contexts, to concerns over how balanced a person's language use was. In a response to these concerns, Fishman (2004) contended that in the actuality of language use, it is rare to find an individual who would be categorized as 'balanced' across domains of use in all competences (speaking, listening, reading and writing) and therefore the notion of "full fluency" in both languages is highly unlikely. Baker confirms this when he states, "A person's ability in two languages are multidimensional and will evade simple categorization" (2006, p 8).

In discussing the need for a more encompassing and less quantitative definition of bilingualism, Baker draws us to the idea of the "holistic view of bilingualism:" (2006, p 12). Along with Grosjean (1982, 1997, 2004) he argues for a more positive image of the bilingual. Advocating that we consider the bilingual as possessing "multi-competences" as, unlike the monolingual, the bilingual excels in several skills at the same time. He questions whether bilinguals should be assessed and compared to monolinguals at all; advocating instead that bilinguals be assessed on separate criteria which do not emphasize the traditional language testing of the past but focus on the use of language across domains. Baker contends it is only through a holistic approach that we will gain access to 'who' a bilingual speaker is – a person who speaks two or more languages with different people, in different contexts, across a variety of domains and for whom language proficiency varies depending on when, where and with whom the language is used (Baker, 2006, pp 12-13).

Baker refers to these shifts in language use as the differences an individual experiences in terms of language use and ability, making the case that there is a distinction between the ability to speak two languages, and a life where speaking two languages is part of your lived experience. This is a more contemporary approach to defining a bilingual and

is shared by Grosjean (2010), who argues for newer definitions of the bilingual which will not simply explore levels of fluency but also domains and frequency of use (2010, p 24) this is particularly because the bilingual's language use will be influenced by the "complementary principle" where different language will be used in accordance to need in differing domains (Grosjean, 2004, p 34).

Grosjean (2004) outlines four characteristics of a bilingual. First, bilinguals are rarely equally fluent in both languages, as they use them 'in' and 'for' different purposes. Second, bilinguals may still be in the process of acquiring one of their languages or specific skills within a language, as in the case of several of the children in this study who lacked literacy skills in English on par with those they had in Greek. Next, for many bilinguals, use of language and competence will shift and change over time, often in response to the environmental needs of school, work and social change and emotion (Pavlenko, 2006). And finally, bilinguals do not live in a vacuum; they interact not only with other bilinguals but also with monolinguals and as such they adapt to each situation (Grosjean, 2004, p 34). What emerges is a definition of bilingualism and the bilingual which accounts for context, fluency, purpose and personality and where language use will shift and change based on all these criteria.

In discussing empirical studies of bilingualism, Bialystok asserts that bilingualism, particularly in children cannot be assessed, classified and held to some absolute scale because bilingualism is a non-categorical variable which cannot be so easily measured (2001, p 19). Bialystok argues that attempting to apply categorization to bilingualism is "an obfuscation of the complexity of bilingualism and a diminishment of the intricacy of children's language skills" (2001, p 8). This is because children's language is by definition partial; whether they are bilingual or not, so their bilingual ability will be partial as well and therefore cannot be so readily categorized like other common variables such as age, gender or grade. As a consequence we need a more helpful and sinuous definition of bilingualism.

Baker and Grosjean's notions of bilingualism working within domains and frequency of use are particularly important in helping us to create this more supple definition of the term. Such a definition moves away from measuring and balancing to exploring bilingualism in terms of a continuum where there is movement according to context or domain. As such for the purposes of this study, bilingualism and bilinguals are defined as those who use two languages, according to need, where there may be significant shifts in language use, fluency levels and abilities depending on these contexts and domains (Grosjean, 2007; 2004; 1982). All of this will be influenced by a 'complementarity principle' because "Bilinguals usually acquire and use their languages for different purposes, in different domains of life, with different people. Different aspects of life normally require different language" (Grosjean, 1997, p 165). This definition reflects the realities of the children in this study who, as we shall see, report using both languages on a daily basis within the language domains of home and school.

#### 3.3.4 Applying Labels to Bilinguals

Added to the debate over defining a bilingual, there is a seemingly endless list of categories applied to bilinguals and bilingualism – simultaneous, sequential, balanced, elite, additive, subtractive, circumstantial, successive, functional, minimal and maximal are all used in an attempt to qualify type of bilingual (See Edwards 2004, and Grosjean 2004; Baker 2006; Baker and Jones, 1998 for complete definitions). While acknowledging the need for some classification, the cornucopia of labels available is undoubtedly overwhelming. Meisel stresses this need to categorize and define the type of language acquisition a person possesses is due to the monolingual perception that bilingualism is somehow abhorrent and therefore has to be defended as being normal in relation to monolingualism (2004, p 92). Though this may be the case, for discussion purposes some level of categorization is also necessary. Particularly as understanding how, when, where and with whom a person uses his language will help us to recognize what his language needs may be. Importantly, I am not advocating for the slapping on

of labels to bilinguals; however, categorisation can be a useful starting point from which to launch an examination of an individual or a cohort; provided that in doing so we do not overlook the individual. In order to do so, we must work to illuminate the linguistic and learning needs of the individual and consider how best we can respond to them, so for example an immigrant child who begins school monolingual and struggles to cope with learning a second language would not be viewed as having the same educational or linguistic profile as a child who is raised bilingually and enters the school system with some competence in the language of instruction. Consequently the following discussion on simultaneous and sequential bilinguals should be understood within the larger framework of bilingualism, a framework which accounts for the flexible and idiosyncratic use of language by the individual within a specific context and situation.

#### 3.3.4.1 Bilingual Development: simultaneous or sequential

Newer understandings of bilingualism accept that bilinguals will have shifting competences in their languages due to circumstance, input, time, and age and that these shifts and changes are not deficit. Two main ways in which bilingualism develops are through simultaneous or sequential acquisition of languages. Baker refers to simultaneous bilingualism as the “acquiring of two languages at the same time from birth” (2006, p 97) often with a one-person, one - language approach; whereas he defines sequential bilingualism as “when a child learns one language in the home then goes to a nursery or elementary school and learns a second language” (2006, p 97 citing Thompson, 2000). Meisel positions simultaneous bilingualism as multiple first language acquisition (2004, p 95) while, Grosjean defines simultaneous bilingualism as the acquisition of two languages before the age of three (1982, p 179) and importantly observes that age of acquisition will not predetermine the degree of bilingualism experienced. Additionally a simultaneous bilingual child is not two monolinguals in one and the languages will not likely be equally developed so that a child raised as the children in this study are, using both languages at home in a one- parent one- language



approach will quite likely enter school with well-developed communicative skills in one language while having lesser developed skills in the other. This change results in part from the recognition that language dominance will shift throughout life thereby making it irrelevant whether a child began speaking both languages at birth or at age three (Meisel, 2004, p 94). Finally, Bialystok (2001, 2004) discusses a debate over a critical period in second language acquisition, particularly in relation to child versus adult language acquisition, where she contends later in life language learners will not experience the success of simultaneous bilinguals.

Applying a clear classification to a child's bilingualism is inherently complex. Though this may be the case there is some value, particularly in studies such as this, for the use of labels to loosely clarify and define the language abilities of participants. Particularly, as Grosjean argues, it is so important to understand the type of bilingual language use a child experiences (Grosjean, 2006, pp 37 – 39). As such within this work the label of simultaneous bilinguals is applied to the participants who are all raised in homes where they use both Greek and English. This was done through a one- parent, one- language approach. The term simultaneous as applied to this group does not however, assume a similar dominant language within the group, so that there may have been children within the cohort for whom Greek was more dominant than English and vice versa. This was felt to be important so as to clearly differentiate this particular group of bilingual speakers from the large number of second language learners who might be seen entering the local school system not yet speaking Greek.

#### 3.3.4.2 Responding to Deficit Theories about Bilingualism

Simultaneous bilingual language development follows the general pattern of language acquisition in monolinguals, yet it has often been accused of causing language delay.

The lack of any evidence to support these accusations must be emphasized as colloquial understandings of simultaneous bilinguals often focus on this concept of confusion and delay as impinging upon proper language development in the child (Baker, 2006, p 350). Though there is certainly no clear connection between simultaneous bilingualism and language delay, it is also important to highlight that simultaneous bilinguals like all other bilinguals are not ‘balanced’ bilinguals and they may very likely demonstrate a context specific dominance of one language (Grosjean, 2010, p 34). This is because the bilingual activates language within separate modes of language use so that there is the notion of the situational continuum which ranges from the monolingual to the bilingual speech mode as described by Grosjean. “In the monolingual speech mode the bilingual deactivates one language (but never totally) and in the bilingual mode, the bilingual speaker chooses a base language, activates the other language and calls on it from time to time in the form of code-switches and borrowings” (Grosjean, 2007, p 429). Vital to this discussion is the manner in which bilinguals activate and use language as described previously, it is part of the normal mode of language use for the bilingual child to experience borrowing and code-switching between languages. Code-switching is defined by Romaine as “the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or sub-systems” (1989, p 121). Edwards further clarifies the point that the phenomena has many varied names and that “However we divide the subject up, and whatever labels we apply – interference, code-switching, mixing, transference and so on – it is clear that in all cases something is borrowed from another language” (2009, p 19). What is of importance here is that these incidents, no matter what they are called, constitute part of the normal repertoire of the bilingual speaker and should not be equated with deficit.

Theories of deficit have been levelled at bilinguals precisely because of issues such as code-switching and the persistent conceptualization of monolingual language use as the norm. These theories posit that, particularly in children, there are negative attributes to second language acquisition principally when it occurs simultaneously at an early age

and as a result, such theories often categorize individuals considered insufficient in their abilities in either one of both of their languages as semilingual or double-semilingual (Baker, 2006, p 10). Skutnabb-Kangas (2000, 2006) has criticized these particular terms as being not only disparaging to bilinguals, and immigrants, but also as seeking to evoke a sense of deficit and underachievement in connection with both immigrants and bilinguals. Grosjean (2010) also argues that the main issue with such labelling is not the label but the sentiment behind it which stems from the continued comparison of the bilingual to the monolingual. Garcia calls on Foucault (1991) and Erickson (1995, p 45) to illustrate that such rhetoric stems from a hegemonic practice where monolingualism is viewed as the norm. The result of this hegemony is that bilingualism is only accepted when it is viewed as double monolingualism and when there is a denial of the complex multilingualism experienced by most bilingual speakers (Garcia, 2009, p 141). She argues for an innovative understanding of bilingualism which is dynamic and where bilingualism rather than monolingualism is taken as the norm. Such an understanding views language as multiple and ever-adjusting with the result that bilingual speakers translanguage or code-switch by moving through their languages as needed to maximize communicative potential (Garcia, 2009, p 140 also see Creese & Blackledge, 2010).

### 3.3.5 Summary on Bilingualism

Ultimately, the need to define a person's bilingualism whether sequential or simultaneous has lessened in relevance since contemporary concepts of bilingualism have become less concerned with attempts at achieving balance. This is due to the debunking of older ideas about bilinguals which viewed them as two monolinguals in one person, replaced nowadays with the more contemporary view of the bilingual as using language in a dynamic, moving and shifting manner which is highly context and purpose specific.

### 3.4 Bilingual Children and Schooling

“The concept of language is in many different cases as much a political, cultural and historical concept as it is a linguistic concept” (Trudgill 2002, p114)

Delving into the area of bilingual education is like opening Pandora’s Box and as the mandate of this work is to explore the experiences of bilingual children within monolingual schools there is neither the space nor purpose to provide a full review of literature examining bilingual education here. There are nevertheless several issues related to bilingual education which are valuable in elucidating the experiences of these bilingual children in monolingual schools. Consequently this section explores areas of bilingual education policy and approaches relevant to this particular study. The first is the approach of schools systems towards language, which is often outlined in the policy on language development and described as maintenance or mainstreaming, additive or subtractive. Second, school success of bilingual children is explored with particular reference to policy concerning Cummins (1979, 1991) controversial “basic interpersonal communication skills” versus “cognitive-academic language proficiency” theory, also known as the Threshold Hypothesis (Cummins & Swain, 1998; Swain & Cummins, 1979), and relevance it may have to bilingual children in monolingual school systems.

#### 3.4.1 Approaches to Education and Bilingualism: additive or subtractive

Wei (2007) notes that there are roughly 6,000 languages in the world, divided between approximately 200 countries, making it redundant for us to be drawn into debate over the variable merits or drawbacks of bilingualism. Ultimately, for a large percentage of the world’s population bilingualism is the norm. However, the issue of how educational policy and schools address the needs of bilingual children is heavily debated. As a fundamental backdrop to this debate, Lambert (1975) proposed the existence of two

approaches to bilingualism: additive and subtractive. In additive bilingual education, often associated with elite and immersion bilingual programs, the educational goal is to facilitate the student leaving school with knowledge of two languages. Whereas in subtractive bilingualism, associated with bilingual education programs throughout America, the pupil enters school with knowledge of another language and leaves with knowledge of a target language.

The debate between the two approaches and their various merits has resulted in a series of questions surrounding bilingual education, such as whether it is the responsibility of schools to facilitate children leaving with a command of two languages, as a maintenance approach would advocate. Or is it the responsibility of the school to ensure that the first language of these children is slowly replaced by the target language so they 'fit' into society, as a mainstreaming approach would advocate. Additionally questions over the role of the first language in education, the language of instruction, the use of two languages at school and the pursuit of maintenance programs all arise in connection with bilingual education programs in schools. Though reasonable questions for a school system to explore, the fundamental issue with all these concerns is that they stem from a position where monolingualism rather than bilingualism is the norm. They ignore the reality that for a majority of children in the world, bilingualism is the norm (Genesee, 2001, 2004, p 549; Garcia, 2009) and as a result concerns over its development and/or place in their education and lives are moot. This is most certainly the case with the children in this study, who enter school not as monolinguals; but as, bilinguals who have to negotiate their education using one of their languages. Given the changing trends of globalization and migration, particularly across Europe, children such as these constitute a group which is bound to increase in numbers in the coming years. A group which, as Garcia elucidates, the current models of bilingual education which focus on additive, subtractive, maintenance or mainstreaming of language are not sufficient (2009, p 142), particularly as these children and societies are increasingly global and glocal and involved in the linguistic negotiation of language both within the local bilingual community and on a global scale.

Finally, the education ‘of’ or ‘for’ bilinguals is heavily affected by issues of social class. These social class issues and their effects on the bilingual child’s development and mastery of target languages are discussed by Bialystok (2001) and Skutnabb-Kangas (1999; 1976) who conclude that the socioeconomic class of the bilingual student will play a crucial role in school success. Skutnabb-Kangas refers to the difference between what she terms elite bilingualism and popular bilingualism, where elite bilingual programs are also often additive programs as children become bilingual through programs of school immersion deliberately chosen and established by educators to develop the target language and where they often involve significant family support (Helot and Young, 2000, 2005; Baker, 2000). On the contrary, popular bilinguals, often the children of immigrants who become bilingual due to family circumstances of immigration, experience their bilingualism through immersion in public school systems where they are usually not offered any first language teaching support and the intention is to work from the first language into a target language. As a result, students often enter school monolingual in one language and leave monolingual in another. There are very few European bilingual programs which aim to provide language maintenance and development for new minority groups, and as Helot and Young point out, in the French context this may be because the term bilingual is reserved for these elite additive programs and therefore not applied to bilingual immigrant groups (Helot and Young, 2002, 2005), a situation which is somewhat analogous with Cyprus.

### 3.4.2 Education *for* Bilinguals

As mentioned previously, particularly in Europe, there are very few situations where immigrant groups will encounter educational programs where there is an official bilingual maintenance program available. As a result, the majority of these children attend monolingual schools often as Low English Proficiency students (Hakuta and Mostafapour, 1996), though it could just as easily be LGP – Low Greek Proficiency

students. Alongside this group there is the growing number of simultaneous bilinguals raised with the one-language one-parent approach, who also attend monolingual schools. This group is often unseen in the policy and literature on bilingualism and as Jorgensen and Quist (2009) discuss, this is influenced by what they see as a disjunction between the many supranational initiatives (such as The European Community Commission directive 77/486) advocating minority language support at school, and a sense of “national romanticism” which has resulted in these initiatives not being implemented at the local level. It is their contention that due to this minority language students experience a sense of marginalization at school (Jorgensen and Quist, 2009, p 168).

The limited literature on bilingual students entering monolingual school systems, where there is little or no bilingual educational support available, means that much of what we understand about their experience and learning needs has to be extrapolated from literature on bilingual or LEP (Limited English Proficiency). With regard bilingual children in monolingual schools, Walter reminds us that the majority of children will enter school with an identifiable language (2010, p 135) meaning most children enter school with some language competence in the Language of Instruction alongside their native language. However, these competences may be limited, and as a result may affect their learning experience at school (Walter, 2010). Thomas and Collier (1997) explored these competences when they reviewed the success of LEP students across a series of school districts and within a variety of bilingual education programs. They concluded that a large percentage of these children did not achieve academic success on par with their monolingual peers and scored in the lowest levels for academic achievement. Thomas and Collier refer to the disjuncture between these students’ language abilities, and school tasks and assignments which results in underachievement as the “language effect”. Though focused on bilingual programs, they also examined the academic achievement of LEP students who were entered into structured immersion or submersion programs – essentially monolingual schooling: the results showed these students’ academic achievement levels suffered. Likewise Walter concludes that the

failure rates of LEP students enrolled in a variety of bilingual education programs shows a strong relationship between lower levels of academic achievement in LEP students with fewer years of L1 support (Walter, 2010, p 137). Ultimately, Thomas and Collier (1997) determined the only groups to achieve on par with their monolingual peers were in dual language programs. Though different in settings, Thomas and Collier's work allows us to infer that much like LEP students entering structured immersion or submersion programs, a bilingual child entering a monolingual school system like the children in this study may also demonstrate a disjunction between knowledge of the language of instruction and academic achievement, particularly it has been established that bilinguals are not two monolinguals in one body and as such they are likely to experience varying abilities in their languages across language domains. In Cyprus there is no bilingual education program beyond additional classes provided for the teaching of Greek as a second language and teachers do not currently appear to be trained in bilingual education (See Appendix 1 for University of Cyprus Prospectus showing classes related to bilingual education). Consequently, it is reasonable to assume that for at least some bilingual children entering monolingual schools without learning support, there may be a "language effect" on their academic achievements.

This is consistent with Skutnabb-Kangas and Tourkoma (1976) and Cummins (1979, 1984, and 2000) who report associations between school success and language support in the first language. Cummins' (1979) controversial BICS-CALP, "basic interpersonal communication skills:" verses "cognitive-academic language proficiency", distinction or the threshold effect contends that academic success in the target language will be dependent on the level of bilingual development. Cummins (1984, 2000) explains there is an important distinction between a student's conversational proficiency in a language and academic proficiency, with the latter being a greater determinant of school success. Cummins hypothesized that English language learners could display relative competency in conversational English, yet not have the academic competency to compete with native speakers of English. He based this argument in part on the concept of language fluency existing on a continuum, much in the same way bilingualism does,



and as a result academic language may be less developed on the linguistic continuum for some language learners. He believes that such learners may need up to five years to catch up with their native speaking peers. The result as Cummins (2000) presents is that children who have limited proficiency are more likely to suffer academically than those who hold either partial or proficient levels of the language of instruction, particularly if they do not receive additional support during the crucial five year period.

Though highly controversial and directed at English Language Learners (ELL), I believe Cummins' theory has relevance for students who enter a monolingual school as bilingual. If these students possess their language on a continuum, which is highly related to context and use, then although they may speak and understand both languages, it is possible they have limited literacy skills in one language, or experience one language as more dominant than the other. Should this be the case, then for the student whose language of instruction is less dominant, there may be an effect on their academic success, particularly if they enter school and do not receive additional linguistic support.

The disjuncture between BICS and CALP has been positioned as a deficit theory used by some to demonstrate that bilinguals have to play catch up with their monolingual peers or suffer with semilingualism where children's language development is seen as insufficient to allow them to adequately communicate in either language. Many scholars Martin - Jones and Romaine, (1986) Edelsky (1983) Baker (2002) - among them have disputed these deficit claims levelled against bilingualism. Additionally, Cummins (2000) and Cummins and Swain (1983) have responded to critics of BICS – CALP.

A second issue which may very likely affect the academic achievement of the bilingual child entering a monolingual school system is connected to what we know about how children store language. Studies have shown that the manner in which bilingual children store and recall information and the role of language in their memory differs from how monolinguals use and recall language (Baker, 2006; Bhatia, and Ritchie, 2004; Meisel,

2004; Haritos, 2002, 2003, 2004; Grosjean, 1982). If bilinguals differ in their cognitive abilities, learning styles and needs, then there is no reason to believe they may not need additional support to develop their academic linguistic skills in the language of instruction. This is one of the concepts posited by Garcia (2009) in discussing translanguaging in bilinguals where she contends the bilingual child draws on all her cognitive abilities while using a language, never shutting off one language or the other. Certainly it would be prudent for us to at the very least consider these differences in the development of academic language profiles for bilingual children.

The children in this study are raised bilingually in homes where both languages are used on a daily basis, and enter a monolingual school setting where there is no bilingual education program aside from lessons for the teaching of Greek as a foreign language and where teachers and curriculum demonstrate little understanding of their bilingualism. For these children, Cummins' "threshold hypothesis" which holds that there are threshold levels of linguistic competencies which must be reached for a child to attain cognitive and academic advantages from being bilingual (Cummins, 1997) contains value in helping us to understand their individual academic journeys as it allows us to explore their language development from a position which accommodates the fact that they are not likely to be 'balanced', 'equal' or necessarily 'Greek dominant' language users. Allowing for variance in their linguistic profiles through BICS – CALP means we can explore whether they need additional support or not, without this we ignore their linguistic backgrounds – as is currently the case. Ultimately I agree with Jorgensen and Quist (2009), who emphasize that although the "threshold hypothesis" has been criticized within the literature, it is still talked about in educational contexts and is perhaps the only theory available which allows an exploration of the learning needs of minority language children.

### 3.4.3 Summary of Bilingual Children and Education

The field of bilingualism is one which has experienced and continues to experience significant controversy and division, principally in relation to the role of language(s) and education. I believe this controversy has caused a sense of polarization within the field, where particularly in light of the many local and state level attacks on bilingual education programs, researchers are overwhelmed with a need to hold their ground, and this has resulted in an overshadowing of the need for the research to become more responsive to the new developments we are experiencing within society. New developments such as the importance of translanguaging (Garcia, 2009), and the recognition that we need to change our understandings of bilinguals and bilingualism to allow for a much more dynamic definition precisely so that groups like the growing numbers of children being raised bilingually within monolingual schools and societies can be accommodated.

### 3.5 Identity

“I belong here, yet I don’t belong here.” Stopes Roe and Chochran (1990, p156)

Conceptualizations of identity have been debated for generations by philosophers, sociologists, linguists and psychologists alike. Accordingly this section does not seek to draw firm conclusions around such a massive and contested area. Rather it strives to develop a general understanding of the most significant issues of identity relevant to the focus of this study, such as the self and others, fluidity in identity, group membership, the role of the nation and culture in identity, multiple and hierarchical identities, mixed or hybrid identities, language and identity and finally identity in the Cypriot context.

### 3.5.1 A Philosophical Grounding for an Explanation of Identity

According to the Oxford American Dictionary, identity is “The condition of being a specified person or thing”. For academic purposes this definition may appear simplistic; however, within it there are parallels to more philosophical approaches to identity such as those proposed by Derrida (2000). In his discussion on *différance* Derrida states that for the individual, consciousness is possible as a means of “self-presence”, or “of the perception of the self” in presence or as “being”. Hall (2000) expands on the concept of ‘being’ when discussing Foucault’s *The Use of Pleasure* (1985). He posits the concept of “being” or “self” as theorized by Foucault and termed “*the qua*” “subject where the individual recognizes himself as subject and which Hall likens to identity (2000, p 26). Both Hall and Foucault suggest one must first recognize one’s self in order to form identity. Once this recognition has taken place, there is the need of the self to interact with others as in Foucault’s concept of “performativity”: the relationship between the self and the other. Hall discusses the ‘other’ when he defines identity as “strategic” and “positional”, stating that identity is not about a “stable core of the self” which unfolds throughout history without change but that it is rather shifting and transitory (2000, p17). Hall contends identities are therefore not unified but fractured and fragmented and constructed across discourses, history, practice and positionality with the result that identities transform and shift based on these factors (Hall, 2000, p17). In this way, identity develops as a result of the interplay between the self and the other and will be influenced not only by who you are, but by who you interact with.

Still the interaction between the self and others is not adequate in understanding identity because as individuals we exist within our contexts. Bourdieu suggests the notion of the *habitus* a lived within space which is inhabited by a human agent who is defined by the systems of power of the *habitus* but not merely passive in this definition. This lack of passivity allows the individual to be active in shaping the *habitus* and her perception of self while also being shaped by the perceptions of others (Bourdieu in Jenkins, 2002, p77). Bourdieu’s *habitus* can be seen as similar to Faircough’s (1995) idea of *ethos*,

where a person's identity is conceived and constructed in the context of the world view and social practices she encounters an identity construction relevant to the experiences of the children in this study as evidenced in the discussion. Giddens draws us to the idea that we are not passive in the way we are shaped by conditions or modernity and this lack of passivity results in our ability to shape and influence our surroundings and not simply be shaped by them (Giddens, 1991, p2). Similarly, Goffman asserts that because identity is not fixed or single and changes and flows across contexts, identities will vary across differing settings where the individual assumes different social roles (Goffman in Alasuutari, 1995, p 111). Importantly he emphasizes that these changes do not have to be set in a longitudinal historical milieu, but can transform and adjust quickly in response to situational changes (Goffman in Alasuutari, 1995).

The notion of identities being formed within the framework of social structure is extrapolated by Martin Alcoff (2003), who discusses identities as not solely an individual affair. She contends identities are fabricated by individuals, but not under conditions of their own choosing, because they are constructed within the constraints of racial, sexual, national, colonial and subordinating conditions. She draws on Hall where he states, "Identities are names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past" (Hall, 1990, p 225). Thus our identities are imposed and self-made, produced by us and forced upon us, through the names we have, the families we belong to, the communities we live in, and from which we are excluded, the histories and history we experience and the way in which we make meaning of the colour of our skin, the shape of our bodies, the language(s) we speak and all the other identity markers of society (Martin Alcoff, 2003, p 3).

### 3.5.2 Group Membership and Identity: inclusion and exclusion in identity

The concept of identity formation as involving both the self and the social is expanded upon by Joseph (2004, 2006), who contends that individual identity is not only

influenced by others, so as to create a sense of self from without and within, but also, fundamentally connected to the group and the group memberships (Joseph, 2004, p 5). He argues that this identity is not only about group belonging and sameness, but also difference. This concept of difference is explained through the idea of ‘who’ one is uniquely: the sense of self. Joseph claims that although on the surface these two concepts may seem oppositional, in actuality they intertwine with the result that to understand identity as sameness means you need to have contact with difference and vice versa (2004, p 37).

In discussing identification, race and gender Butler (1993) suggests that identities are formed through opposition and exclusion, and as a result the marginalization of subjects creates a sense of difference where identity is formed. Butler claims identity as “never fully and finally made, incessantly reconstituted” and that which is “constantly marshalled, consolidated, retrenched, contested and on occasion, compelled to give way” (1993, p 105). In making these claims, Butler has been criticized for the way she portrays exclusion as she has not accounted for variety and difference within groups so all members of her marginalized groups are portrayed as having the same experiences. Hall (1990) also contends identity will emerge as it is constructed against and through difference, essentially leading to the understanding that identity emerges from and through the interaction between the self and the environment, and this interaction will shift, change and adjust throughout a person’s life. Thus the interaction of context, difference, the self and the other in identity formation are all vital. The result of this understanding is that for the children in this study who are raised with two distinct cultures, between home and society, identity would not be bound to either, thereby, allowing the child to move through and between cultures as required by context, growing and developing a sense of self within both contexts. Importantly, like bilingualism, this is not the notion of two selves within one; it is, however, the recognition that as context shifts so too does the self.

### 3.5.2.1 National and Cultural Identities

Though there is certainly a new space within identity research where the focus is on deconstructing the traditional ideas of identity as fixed and non-changing and where there is discussion of identities as more fluid and individual; it would be presumptuous to assume that along with the variety of other identities we assume in our daily lives - mother, sister, wife, colleague or friend - we are not also moulded by our national and linguistic selves. Omoniyi (2006) speaks of the importance of rejecting essentialism so we can account for the individual within our identity constructs, and in doing so acknowledge the role of the nation and shared culture in the formation of the self. Silverstein argues that “Close national, cultural, and in later centuries educational bonds, make individuals perceive “nationality [as] a primordial aspect of one’s very sense of selfhood” (Silverstein 2000, p 109). On the other hand, White (2000) suggests that within the new postmodern approach to identity, it has become increasingly hard to define national identity as it differs in focus and expression for the individual and context. Nevertheless this differing does not preclude our ability to recognize its characteristics (White, 2000).

Joseph also suggests national identity is not fixed and given but fluid and based on the claims, context, time and perceptions of others (2005, p 58). White (2000) contends that in understanding fluidity in identities, it is necessary to recognize national identity as politically and geographically defined; however, within this recognition national identity is also “imagined” by individuals who claim an alliance with it (also see Anderson, 1991 for a discussion of imagined communities). Importantly national identity should not be viewed in simplistic ultra-nationalistic terms as it is so often presented by right wing parties but there is also banal nationalism where our national identities are embodied in the habits of our daily social lives (Joseph, 2005). Ultimately what is important is that we recognize that national identity is neither fixed nor unchanging as it is contextual and subjective.

Poole (2003) emphasizes that national identity is perceived to come before all other identities, and that the nation which gains substance through shared language, history, culture and the reach of morality is professed as part of the self. Featherstone (2003) adds that there is often an idea of conflict and of in and out groups in the sense of national identity experienced by the individual, so individuals frequently experience their national identity as opposed to others' national identities through competition and conflict – the idea of 'we are better than you'. On the other hand Said (2003) refers to an "official culture" which is established in the nation by priests, academics and the state and provides a definition of patriotism, loyalty and boundaries and through this a sense of belonging which defines the official past and the expression of the "general will" (2003, p 335). As a result the self is viewed as intertwined with the nation where the state and other authority figures establish the criteria of a good citizen. This conceptualization of identity is akin to the demonstrations of nationalist rhetoric on display in Cypriot primary schools (See Section 2.4.2) where claims of an "official culture" can certainly be made as the rhetoric and official histories of the past professed within the Cypriot school context mesh with these conceptualizations of identity. However as Spyrou has shown, Cypriot children though enveloped in rhetoric and symbolism focused on the construction of a self as diametrically opposed the national enemy embodied in the Turk; do not experience this in a static manner and within these constraints they are dynamic and active in their own identity constructs (Spyrou, 2006).

### 3.5.3 Multiple and Hierarchical Identities – a challenge to national identity

The demonstration of "official culture" within societies often leads to a lack of recognition of the role of the individual within nationalism. This recognition is vital if we want to avoid being essentialist in how we approach identity. This essentialism is about viewing the individual within a community as only being one way, this is something which Omoniyi defines as "labelling of any number of normative characteristics or practices as constituting the core of an individual or group which is



then used to define them and held to be true of all members of the group” (Omoniyi, 2006, p 16). Omoniyi posits that due to globalization, there is the need for a new conceptualization of identity which he labels a hierarchy of identities. He contends there are two main reasons for the need to frame identities in this way the first is language and the second essentialism. He asserts that language shift, the movement of a community from the use of one often indigenous language to a more elite language or a *lingua franca*, is the result of communities giving up their need to be identified as sociocultural groups; a categorization which predisposes identity is fixed and whole and group based. The second reason is that this essentialism connected to the concept of language as representing an identity which is territorially connected, as in English to England for example, is problematic as it does not account for bilinguals, trilinguals or non-native speakers, in addition to the mobility and globalization currently being experienced by most communities. He contends that identity must be seen as fluid, contextual, negotiated, variable, specific to time and place and hierarchical. Accordingly as individuals we have various identity options available to us at all times, and language choice as an identity marker is only one choice from a variety of possibilities, or as he states from a “cluster of co-present identities but with varying degrees of salience”. For Omoniyi this choice depends on “the preferred presentation of self in a given moment” (2006, p 20) This concept allows us to understand that shifting and moving within identity though certainly influenced by context, is not solely about context. Using Omoniyi’s concept of hierarchy we are given to understand that even within a specified context such as a primary school one will experience a plethora of identity choices from which a given presentation of self can be displayed as needed or desired.

#### 3.5.4 Globalization and Identity: mixed and hybrid identities

Added to this hierarchy of choice, it is important we understand the manner in which globalization has challenged and changed identity. It has been credited with the creation

of newer shared constructs of identity, particularly among youth. Rampton (2000) refers to the idea of “crossing” where youth identities are influenced by globalization to create “generational identities”. Likewise Featherstone speaks of the creation of “third cultures”, consisting of bodies of knowledge, sets of practice, conventions and lifestyles which develop independent of nation-states (2003, p 350). Many of these third cultures transcend the nation state and supersede its dominance, been credited with a growth in Maffesoli’s concept of neo-tribalism as a response to the problems of trying to live with multiple, fractured identities (Featherstone, 2003, p 353). This shifting of identity away from a singular connection to nation and state has particular relevance for children like those in this study who are living in one culture while being influenced by another through their non-Cypriot parent. Indeed the move away from the essentialism of cultures and nationalities to globalized and third cultures has been credited with the formation of a new space where hybridity resides. A hybridity expressed in this particular group of children. Accordingly, influenced by globalization, many cultures and nationalities have experienced increased hybridity and mixedness.

#### 3.5.4.1 Race and Identities

Though this hybridity and mixedness transcends the racial sphere, such as in the creation of youth cultures, much of the discussion on this shift in identity formation has failed to take into account a definition of mixedness beyond a black/white binary. As Ali argues there is an inadequacy in considering mixed race as a coherent and single category, particularly as the discussion of mixedness has developed around the concept of race and racism and traditional concepts of deficiency and dysfunction found in persons of mixed race backgrounds (Ali, 2003, p 5). Though these are important and relevant societal discussions, they are fundamentally limited by the narrowness of the black/white binary of mixedness, making it difficult to discuss the particular experiences of those who do not ‘fit’ into this model. In limiting definitions of mixedness to race within a black/white binary, a significant portion of the population is

rejected on the basis of their colour. Ali contends she found the category of mixed race difficult to apply to her own context – she has a white English mother and a Trinidadian Indian father – similarly the children in this study have one American, English or Canadian parent and one Greek Cypriot, but under current definitions of mixedness would not be considered mixed race. This exclusion of those whose colour places them beyond the black/white binary reinforces the concept of mixedness as tied to negative societal images about race and racism and the damning connotations associated with this traditional definition. Advocating to expand the definition of mixed race does not preclude the unique and social, and historical experience of people who share two racial backgrounds, but limiting the definition to a black/white binary allows the classification itself to take on the cloak of racism – on the one hand condemning society for its social, historical and negative fixation and obsession with the mixing of ‘colour’ while at the same time excluding children who do not meet some understood measure of colour, but who are nevertheless mixed.

#### 3.5.4.2 Being Bicultural

Added to the complex picture of who these children are, is the additional component of culture. Culture is defined as holding the shared beliefs, values and behaviour of a social group (Byram, 2003, p 50). Thus being bicultural involves holding the beliefs, values and behaviours for two cultures. Paulston (1992) defines being bicultural as being “able to interpret what the same phenomenon means from the viewpoint of two cultures”. Researchers have questioned a person’s ability to maintain allegiance to two separate ethnic/cultural identities without conflict. Yet much of this research stemmed from secondary bicultural socialization where individuals struggle with adjustment to new cultural and social norms. Significantly, possible conflict in having or holding separate cultural patterns and norms is lessened if one considers the concept of multiple and hierarchical selves, discussed in the previous sections of this chapter. Nonetheless,

for the purposes of this study it is important to explore the concept of biculturalism as the children are raised in homes where there are two cultural traditions.

Byram argues that there is a lack of literature on what he terms primary bicultural socialization (2003, p 55). This categorization involves an individual who is raised with an affiliation to two distinct cultures, as opposed to secondary bicultural socialization where an individual takes on a new culture through socialization in later life, most often by becoming an immigrant. Secondly, the idea of a culture as distinct from an ethnic or national affiliation is made by Byram in his discussion on how group membership involves both self and societal acceptance into the group. Byram views ethnic/national group membership as taking place by two means, either through a descendent or by shared culture (beliefs, values, behaviours and language). He puts forward that membership in ethnic/national groups for members who are bicultural has to be managed carefully as most groups are mono-ethnic and do not easily tolerate hybrids (2003, p 53). Finally, he contends it is possible for an individual to hold two cultural/ethnic identities though there may be some sense of conflict experienced by the individual depending on how majority groups perceive and attribute identities. Thus the bicultural individual is involved in the negotiation and management of dual or multiple identities and cultures. What emerges is an understanding that though a bicultural individual may hold two cultural identities this is not done in uncomplicated manner and therefore will be managed both by the individual and the groups to which he bellows. Demonstrations of this type of management were part of the experiences of the children in this study.

#### 3.5.4.3 Summary of Section

Condensing the various complex levels of identity discussed here is certainly challenging. Additionally, it is not my intention to use essentialism in this discussion on the identity experience of this group of children; however, if we are to understand their

identities within school, it is important to reflect on all of the influences on this identity. I would conjecture like Omoniyi that identities are fluid, shifting and hierarchical and as such are called upon to respond to the instance and to resist essentialism. Nonetheless as we are the products of our context, the children in this study must also negotiate their sense of identity within the constraints of national and ethnic community membership, as they experience two cultural, national and ethnic backgrounds. Finally and significantly for this particular group, the identification of being mixed is important as it affirms the sense of duality they experience not only in culture; but also, within this specific context in terms of difference markers. Beyond the cultural, national and ethnic influences on the identities of this group, there is the additional component of language which plays a significant role in their identity construct as they are being raised bilingually. It is to this issue of language and identity that the next section now turns.

### 3.6 Language and Identity

“Language was, and still remains, central to symbolic domination”

(Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977)

Joseph (2004) suggests identity is constructed not only individually and socially, but also linguistically. He considers that language has traditionally had two main purposes: as a means of representation, and as a means of communication with others (2004, p 15) to this he adds a third purpose of language as identity. Joseph suggests it is the traditional favouring of the self in identity, the ego, which has allowed us to exclude the role of language in identity formation and if we remove this, we can see how language is instrumental in this formation (Joseph, 2004, p 38). For Joseph, language is for interpretation, identity ascription or placing people into categories or identities (2004, p 40). He contends language has multiple uses and these are much like the multiple identities an individual assumes when using language. Tabouret-Kellner also addresses the multiplicity of language where language acts are seen as those of identity and

integral to social interaction (1997, p 315). Accordingly language is about the self, the collective, the institutional and the global.

The concept of language as identity is further reinforced by Riley, who asserts that because identity is socially constructed, the self can only emerge as a result of communicative activity with others (2007, p 83). Consequently our social identities are encoded with language and are the result of the group memberships we have, each of which is knowledge and language based (Riley, 2007, p 113). Thus identities are not only created and maintained on the basis of our self-conception, national, ethnic or hierarchical positioning alone but are also ascribed to us by others, who often use our linguistic abilities to do this.

Bloomaert and Verschueren (1991) contend that language is an identity marker or a categorizing criterion in terms of national identification (1991, p 358). Importantly though this identification is not static, and shifts and changes over time. They describe how within a European context there has traditionally been a view of society as 'homogeneity' where ideal societies are viewed to 'not' have differences, particularly linguistic differences, as these led to conflict. This 'homogeneity' is based on the concept that language creates an identity for a group, and groups define themselves on the basis of subjective nations through territory. The result is that there is a connection between group, language and territory which often leads to nationalism. Thus language creates identities for groups by generating a sense of unity for people, while at the same time it divides by excluding others (Bloomaert, 2006; Bloomaert and Verschueren, 1991, p 370, also see Gellner, 1983 for a discussion of nationalism).

In discussing the role of language in national identification Safran (1999) argues that language is only one of the traditional ties to nation, and it is only when other traditional ties weakened that language becomes more connected to national or collective identity. Therefore when traditional religious and political ties weaken, language is manipulated as an instrument of collective consciousness used to define group membership (Safran,

1999, p 82). Within the Cypriot context this is akin to the debates over the official use of the Greek Cypriot Dialect in education, which results from the political issues and developed from partisan and social groups interested in positioning Cyprus as Greek. Safran highlights that language and nationalism are not necessarily conjoined, as there are many states where language is not highly connected to nationalism. However this is often because the state legitimized a particular language as a national language which ultimately led to the absorption of other languages (Safran, 1999, p 84). The fallibility of Safran's position is it assumes that other languages in use within the state will disappear as a consequence of a national language, which may not always be the case, and this position certainly does not account for the growth in the use of English as a global *lingua franca*. As Safran concludes, the impact of language on national or ethno-national identity will ultimately depend on the individual. This is because, for some people language is viewed instrumentally so they will pick up, use and choose language based on convenience, whereas for others language and ethno-nationalism are intertwined. However language is used, by the individual or the group there is certainly no question that it will influence and mould identities of both.

### 3.6.1 A Postmodern View of Language and Identity

In their study on Welsh children and identity, Scourfield *et al.* (2006) explored how children viewed the language they spoke as essential to 'who' they are. They found that for children there was a collapsing of linguistic and national categories resulting in a connection between speaking and being Welsh. Importantly though, this connection was not exclusive to language, so the children included even non-Welsh speakers in their definitions of those who were Welsh (Scourfield *et al.*, 2006, p 133). This may have been because even though language is influential in the construct of identity, it would be wrong to assume that it is singular, static or one dimensional. Ultimately although for many people there is a connection between language and nationality/ethnicity, it would be restricting to assume this connection always exists. This is because there is a place

for discourse on language which may not tie it so greatly to identity whether national or self-identity. Heller (1999) addresses one aspect of this in the context of Quebec when she describes how for many students the knowledge of French is viewed less in terms of identity and more about “symbolic capital” to allow access to further education, employment, and (Heller, 1999, p 270 & 271, also see Heller, 2003).

The concept of language as an agent or a commodity is also addressed by Pennycook (2006), who questions the role of the grand narrative within the field of language and identity, and particularly the grand narratives of linguistic imperialism verses that of linguistic rights where the debate rages as to the role of English in language loss throughout the world and the idea of securing language rights for all endangered languages. Pennycook’s contention is that we need to rethink these debates as their scale takes on a sense of hegemony and creates a dogmatic discourse. Rather we need to deconstruct the role of language and identity and allow ourselves to view language as a performative agent, used by each individual as their context and person sees fit often regardless of identity. The idea of language as a performative agent is expressed in the data collected within this study where the children use or are required to use their English skills in a performative manner within the school context. Ultimately though it is important to recognize the connections between language and identity and language as a commodity and performance we need to acknowledge that these constructs will vary depending on the context and the individual, much as the next section demonstrates about language and identity in Cyprus.

### 3.7 Identity, Language and the Cypriot Context

Reviewing the literature on identity and language leads us to acknowledge identities as fluid, multiple, hierarchical and linguistic, while also recognizing they are still heavily influenced by the national. In exploring the self and other in Cyprus, Spyrou (2000, 2001 and 2006) found that for Greek Cypriot children, the Turk as the principal enemy



was the primary ‘other’ against which children constructed their own national identity. He asserts that for Cyprus it is possible to conclude that there are Greeks because there are Turks (Spyrou, 2006), theorising boundaries between the two communities as not only physical and symbolic, but ethnic. One of the consequences of this construct in Cyprus has been the emergence of the self as one who is superior to others, as one group constructs itself as ethnically distinct and opposed to the other (As discussed in Section 2.4.2 Nationalism in Cypriot Education Today). Spyrou asserts that the ‘us and them’ construct of identity in Cyprus, is even evident at the lexical level where the Turk is usually referred to in the singular (ο Τούρκος) so essentialism towards ‘the other’ is applied, resulting in the construct of only one kind of Turk – a bad Turk. He maintains this essentialism leads to an adversarial relationship between us and them, and one which becomes a fact of the past and the future. The eternity of conflict between the Turk and the Greek, is perpetuated in Cyprus through the construct of the other/Turk, the unresolved political and physical division of the island and the imaginations of ‘the other’ which are as Said (1979), and Holloway and Valentine (2000), observe dependent on “supposition, associations and fiction” (Said, 1979, p 54). For Cyprus this eternity is complicated by an ethnocentric and nationalistic public educational system where children from both sides of the island do not have contact with each other.

A consequence of this construct is that it develops in a manner which relies heavily on the idea of superiority where ‘we’ are superior to ‘them’. Once this sense of superiority becomes embedded within the society, it permeates the perceptions of ‘all others’. As a result, there is superiority not just over the Turk but over all those who are different. This may be one of the reasons there is continuing heavy ethnic nationalism in Cyprus even the face of immigration and the changing demographics of the country. Additionally, this opposition towards ‘the other’ fuels resistance to the creation of a more permeable, embracing, holistic Cypriot national identity, rather than the more common Greek Cypriot one. A Greek Cypriot identity which Anthias believes is absent because “The concept of Cyprus is divested of value in and of itself: it is an apology for not being complete and a form of self-hatred and denial is sometimes witnessed”

(Anthias, 2006, p 177) therefore claiming such a national identity is itself devoid of value.

### 3.7.1 Positioning of Language, Identity and 'others' in Cypriot Education

The negative connotation of 'other' embodied within the reality of Cypriot society will certainly influence the position the bilingual children in this study hold within the school setting. Current research on attitudes and experiences of immigrant, non-indigenous and Turkish children within state schools has indicated that issues of racism remain "marginalized issues even though there is evidence of their presence in Greek-Cypriot schools" (Zembylas, 2010b, p 312). These issues are complicated as Cypriot students position towards others is found to be heavily influenced by nationalism and racism (Zembylas and Lesta, 2011; Spyrou, 2009; Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2009; Panayiotopoulos and Nicolaou, 2007; Trimikliniotis, 2004; Angelides *et al.* 2003). Indeed the school system has been characterized as composing a xenophobic environment (Zembylas and Lesta, 2011; Commission for Educational Reform, 2004). The result is that for this group of bilingual children there is a complex negotiation of their identities within the school as they sit between various groups. Finally of particular importance in the Greek Cypriot context is the notion of the idealized native speaker (Leung, *et al.*, 1979), the speaker who embodies highly developed language skills in Standard Modern Greek, as opposed to Greek Cypriot Dialect. While acknowledging a place for the Greek Cypriot dialect, the speaker of 'proper Greek' has until recently presented the ideal citizen within the school setting, and represents a standard other speakers strive to emulate in their language production.

### 3.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has explored the literature relevant to understanding the experiences of language and identity of this group of bilingual children in state elementary schools in Cyprus. It has established the multidimensional and fluid experiences of children in schools which involve interplay of language shifts alongside those of identity as they construct an understanding of the specific context of Cypriot schools where nationalism, ethnocentrism and xenophobia play a heavy role in the construct of self, use of language and view of others. Perhaps most significant to our discussion is the acknowledgment of the individuality of the experiences and identities of the children. Though heavily influenced by context, the recognition that there is not one way of being for these children and that each child will have unique and exclusive experiences, all of which are valid and legitimate is paramount to the understanding of the position of this study. In an attempt to further place the study within its context, the next chapter explores the journey and position of the researcher in coming to this area of research. This positioning of the researcher is important in establishing the framework under which the investigation was conducted and interpreted, a discussion on which then follows.

## Chapter Four: Researcher Positionality and the Journey to the Research

“I belong here, yet I don’t belong here. I can’t say if I belong; it’s up to the people here.”

(Stopes-Roe and Cochrane, 1990, p 156)

### 4.0 Introduction

Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p18) observe that behind the research and all its components there is the researcher and her personal biography which consists of her particular class, gender, race, culture and ethnic community standpoint. Similarly McCaslin and Scott (2003) write of the researcher as the primary research instrument of a study. They posit that it is paramount for the researcher to both recognize and convey to the reader her perspective, bias and relationship with the research topic at the start of the research, so both researcher and reader can approach the investigation with a sense of clarity (2003, p 453). I believe outlining my position in terms of who I am, why I am interested in this particular area of research and other relevant influences on the research process is of particular importance in small scale qualitative studies such as this where the development of relationships with participants constitutes a substantial influence on the research process. Additionally, I position the research and the researcher as subjective; consequently, it is important to acknowledge the influences on the research. This chapter explores the role of the researcher in the research process. It begins by examining the significance and dilemma of the researcher’s status as both insider and outsider within the context of this study (Kusow, 2003). The chapter continues by exploring the interplay and influences these statuses have within the context of Cypriot society and the particular confines of this subgroup of the society. Finally, the chapter concludes by scrutinizing the role gender, adulthood and immigrant status played in the positionality of the researcher and in the establishment of a “cocategorical incumbency” a closer connection with the respondents due to shared backgrounds and social groups (Roulston *et al.* 2001, p 748).

## 4.1 Being Insider or Outsider

Kusow's (2003) reference to the role of the researcher as either insider or outsider has been contested in cross cultural research. On the other hand, Young (2004) emphasizes that traditionally research, particularly with relation to race, has valued the insider status of the researcher, advocating the perception that data collected from this perspective would somehow be more "meaningful, accurate and honest" (Young, 2004, p 188). He reminds us that the insider status of a researcher is not an open ticket to data which cannot or could not be accessed by an outsider researcher. Rather Young asserts that insider researcher status, though undoubtedly valuable in field work, conveys its own mirage of complicated issues related to the researcher's status, all of which must be addressed if the researcher wishes to truly acknowledge all influences on the data. Ultimately one is never only insider or outsider but just as we shift through our identities so too will our status within the research shift, with the result that within specific contexts and confinements we will experience elements of being both insider and outsider.

### 4.1.1 My Status within the Cypriot Society: insider and outsider

For this investigation, I hold insider status within the population I am studying. I am an English woman married to a Greek Cypriot and am mother to two bilingual/bicultural children who have been through the state education system in Cyprus. As such, I maintain an insider status within the community of mixed marriage families whose children are the focus of this study. Indeed this insider status was initially my 'way in' to contact with many of the participants. Furthermore, I disclosed my insider status both to the children and their families before and during the interview process, so all participants and their families knew my status. I believe this disclosure was ethically important (Oakley, 1981) to ensure participants were clear with regard to my reasons for researching this group. Ultimately the disclosure of my status as a member in this

community facilitated smoother access to the children through their families and perhaps influenced how forthcoming families were in discussing issues related to their experiences with me rather than with a researcher with whom they did not share this group membership. Nonetheless, I also recognize as does Kusow (2003) that insider-ness should not be viewed as a placebo to developing a relationship with participants. Consequently, I conducted multiple interviews to facilitate the development of my relationships with the participants. Moreover, due to the nature of this subgroup in Cyprus and because my sampling was purposeful and snowballed, as explained in the next chapter, I was already known to several of the children and their families. This familiarity ranged from a loose social connection through mutual friends to a highly familiar one where for example, one family were distant relatives of my husband's. This social and/or familiar connection undoubtedly facilitated my insider status with the participants and established a "cocategorical incumbency" (Roulston *et al.* 2001, p 748).

Even though I shared this insider status with this group, I also held outsider status in several areas. First of all, I am a non-Cypriot researching the Cypriot context, an English woman researching a society within which I am often perceived as an outsider. This is because even though I speak Greek, have knowledge and understanding of Cypriot society and would consider myself integrated in the social life in Cyprus, for certain members of the population here I am and always will be 'ξένος' - a stranger or foreigner. (Reasons for these perceptions and other issues of nationalism are discussed in Chapter Two). My 'foreignness' also affects how I understand Cypriot society, as my own experiences and expectations impact my interpretation and understanding of it.

An additional layer of my outsider status within the society is that the study involves a group beyond my immediate work environment. I am not now, nor have I ever been a primary school teacher. I am an English as a Foreign Language teacher to adults at a local university. My interest in this group of children stemmed from my own experiences as of raising bilingual children in the Cypriot context. As a result, I have

had to work my way through a steep learning curve regarding children's experiences, primary education and the language learning needs of younger learners while conducting this study. Consequently I do not consider myself to have the contextual background or status that could be afforded the researcher who directly researches within his or her own workplace.

## 4.2 Additional Influences on Researcher Positionality and the Research

### 4.2.1 Gender

Added to my community membership, my gender also influenced the research and my status with both the children and their parents. For the children I believe my being female meant that I was often perceived in the role of teacher. Children are accustomed to teachers and to being asked questions by teachers; as a result, particularly in our initial contacts, this insider status provided a starting point for our relationship to develop from. However, this perception was certainly not uncomplicated and there were obvious power issues connected to this 'teacher likeness' discussed in the next section of this chapter. In addition, as stated earlier the children were aware, or made aware that I was a mother of bilingual/bicultural children of my own, children who in some cases they knew or knew of. In this way my intimate knowledge of and connection to the children's community not only afforded me a 'way in' but also provided a starting point for discussions about school experiences.

During the interview process, I primarily but not exclusively had contact with mothers with whom I often shared a "cocategorical incumbency" (Roulston *et al.* 2001, p 748) an intimacy within the research which is facilitated because researcher and participant belong to similar social groups. This was because as a member of a bilingual family I belong to the same societal sub-group as the participants. Furthermore in several cases the mothers were women whom I knew prior to the study. An issue addressed by Garton

and Copland, (2010) which allowed me to experience an insider status with the families, which I believe facilitated their being more accepting and open to me as a researcher and as a consequence, to the research process. My group membership lowered barriers of resistance to the study and enabled the development of non-threatening relationships in which children and their parents expressed they felt I could appreciate their experiences. Certainly none of the participants demonstrated suspicion or concern over misrepresentation or judgment and this inevitably facilitated my insider status and the progression of the research.

#### 4.2.2 Adult Outsiderness and Power

While my group membership and gender influenced my insider status, I acknowledge that I was an outsider in other ways. The primary manner in which I was outsider is my adulthood. I am an adult researcher hoping children will feel comfortable to relay their experiences to me - an exceedingly complex and complicated dynamic. As a result even as I adopted child friendly research methods and I was a familiar face; I was always adult. As such I believe as Mayall states that the idea that as researchers we can teach children to look past the power issues between themselves and the researcher is unrealistic as, “[T]hey [the children] think otherwise: a central characteristic of adults is that they have power over children” (Mayall, 2000, p 121). Ultimately although I worked to diminish this power dynamic, so as to create a more collaborative research environment, the power associated with being an adult researcher in the world of children lead to outsider status and influenced the type of data collected. (See Chapter Five for a discussion on research with children).



#### 4.2.3 Immigrant Status

Finally, alongside my insider-outsider statuses there was an additional aspect of my own life experience which bears considerable influence on this work. Though I am a white English woman by nationality, I have been an immigrant my entire life, having lived at varying times in Jamaica, the United States, Canada and Cyprus. The relevance of my own immigrant experience is twofold. First my background has facilitated my appreciation and understanding of experiences of belonging and not belonging often felt by immigrants, mixed culture or third culture children (Pollack and Van Reken, 2009). Secondly, my personal background has had influence on my political position regarding social justice, immigrant and linguistic rights and other minority issues; all of which have influenced and informed this work. Indeed the particulars of my own experiences led me to my interest in researching the experiences of language and identity of this group of bilingual children in state elementary schools in Cyprus and led me to develop the following research questions to explore this: ‘What do Greek/English bilingual child report about their experiences of language and identity in the state primary education system in the Republic of Cyprus?’ Further to this main research question the following sub-questions were posed:

1. What do the children report about how they experience their identit(ies) in the school context?
  - a. What do they report about how they perceive themselves in the school context?
  - b. What do they report about how others perceive them in the school context?
  - c. What do they report about how the school responds to their non-Cypriot identity?
2. What do the children report about how they experience their bilingualism at school?
  - a. What do these children report about how they manage their two languages at school?
    - i. When, where and with whom are they using Greek and/or English at school?
  - b. What do they report about how the school and or teachers respond to their bilingualism?

### 4.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter has examined my personal journey to this research and as stated at the start of the chapter I believe that the research process cannot be separated from the researcher as all choices and decisions are influenced by the researcher. Ultimately my interest in this area of research and the development of the research questions posed by this study stem from my own personal and professional journey and are clouded by who I am, where I am and where I have been. Acknowledging these influences is of particular importance in such qualitative interpretive research (Denzin, 2002) as delineating the positionality of the researcher increases trustworthiness of the study and its conclusions. The next chapter examines the research methods used, the boundaries of the case and additional influences on these decisions such as the role of social justice concerns in the study, issues and concerns when researching with children and ethical challenges encountered throughout the research process.

## Chapter Five: Research and Methods

### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research and methods used in the study. It begins by exploring case study research, the boundaries of the case and the limitations of case study. The chapter continues by probing the epistemological positioning of the researcher, followed by an examination of critical educational research and the role of social justice research in the formation and approach to the study and participants. Beyond this is a brief discussion of relevant literature on the research and ethics of working with children. The chapter concludes by outlining the study including the rationale for the application of case study, the participants, the data gathering techniques, ethics and trustworthiness.

### 5.1 Case Study Research

#### 5.1.1 Case Study: a definition

Case study as a paradigm has been characterised as inherently difficult to define (Scott and Morrison, 2006; Punch, 2005). Part of the reason for this difficulty is that it is referred to as both a paradigm and a choice of method. Gomm *et al.* assert that this is because case study has been “a blanket term in defining what other social research is not” and that it is by default “ubiquitous” as all research involves some form of the case (2000, p 2). As a result there is a plethora of definitions connected to case study such as “a study of a bounded system, emphasizing the unity and wholeness of that system, but confining the attention to those aspects that are relevant to the research problem at the time” (Stake, 1995, p 258) or as “the way a single instance or phenomena function in context” (Nunan, 1992, p 229). Stake and Torrance (2005) discuss case study as

engaging with, and reporting on the complexity of social activity where participants are able to report on the meaning(s) they ascribe to and gain from a variety of social settings – whereas - Yin's definition examines case study as the in-depth study of events within their real life context, particularly useful when the boundaries between the context and the phenomena may not be clearly defined (2003, p 13 & 72). Similarly, Alderman *et al.*, (1980) describe case study as the study of instances in time that are in action and as a step towards action. Geertz (1973) contends it is an attempt by the researcher to portray a sense of what it is like to be an individual by conducting in-depth research and providing "thick description". Pring (2000) speaks of the concern with understanding meaning, from the perspective of the participant. For Scott and Morrison, the most common definition is "research which includes the study of a few cases sometimes one, in which the intention is to collect a large amount of data and study it in-depth" (2006, p 17).

Given the incredible number of interpretations of definitions for case study it is prudent to remind ourselves that "conflicting precedents exist for any label. It is important for us to recognize that others will not use the words or methods as we do" (Stake, 1995, p 2), as such for the purposes of this project case study is defined as a method where "one case (or perhaps a small numbers of cases) will be studied in detail, using whatever methods seem appropriate" (Punch, 2005, p 144).

#### 5.1.1.1 Boundaries of this Case

One area receiving considerable attention in the discussion about case study is the concept of 'control' of the case (Yin, 2003; Bassey, 1999; Stake, 1998 & 2005), often referred to as the boundedness of the case (Stake, 2005; Bryman, 2001). Hammersley (1992) views case study as a selection strategy where the parameters of the selection process will be important to delineate. Stake (1995) contends that the case is bound by both time and activity; likewise, Adelman *et al.*, (1980) include the concept of a bound

system in their characteristics of a case. Miles and Huberman remind us of the importance of establishing boundaries, so as to define the aspects of the case (1994, p 27). Creswell also contends that the researcher delineate the boundaries of the case (1998, p 61). While sympathetic to the need for boundaries, Stark and Torrance (2005) express how the drawing of lines around a case is fraught with difficulty as demarking any phenomena requires one to be sensitive to its context including the social, historical, political and culture of the case.

Guided by the research questions and context, snowball or chain sampling (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p 28) was used to identify participants with the languages, ethnic backgrounds and school environments required by this study. The establishment of these characteristics resulted in the development of the boundaries for this case. However in doing so, I was aware of Walters' (2007) questioning of Stake's (2005) concerns over clearly marking the boundaries of a case in this manner (Walters, 2007, p 96). She contends these concerns are ultimately modernist, and lack clear acknowledgement of the subjectivity or context of the study and particularly the fluidity connected to these. Walters suggests that particularly in studies with children, boundedness may result in the lack of recognition of a child being actively in communication with social and cultural processes, and instead present a picture of the child as separate from these processes. Consequently, although for purposes of cohesion in this study, I delineate the boundaries for my own case, I acknowledge that the participants within it constitute individual personalities and identities which are multiple and fluid, each of which have value.

#### 5.1.1.2 Limitations of Case Study

Although case study emerged as appropriate for the study it is certainly not without its critics and thus it is important to acknowledge its limitations. Case study has summatively been criticised for its "fuzzy" generalizations (Bassey, 1999), for its "lack

of rigor” (Yin, 1994), for the difficulty associated with conducting a good one (Yin, 1994) and for the tome of data it produces. Nevertheless, it is neither the objective nor mandate of this work to explore and/or respond to all of the criticisms which surround case study. There is however one criticism to which it is necessary to respond: the question of the significance of studies which do not claim generalization and application to other settings (Punch, 2005, p 147).

#### 5.1.1.3 Issues of Generalization in Case Study

The value of a case is frequently called into question in connection with generalizability. As a response, Punch (2005) queries whether case study should set generalization as a goal at all; particularly as generalizability will depend on the context and purpose of the individual research project (Punch, 2005, p 146). Similarly Connolly (1998) suggests that we are mistaken to assume that we should be able to generalize from such work. He defends the small scale study as being concerned with understanding social processes. Stake (2005) draws a distinction between the type of generalizations made in scientific studies of experimentation and the type of “naturalistic generalization” made in case studies. He defines the concept of “naturalistic generalization” as the general understanding furthered by case studies which he distinguishes from the “petites generalisations” and the “grandes generalisations” made in and from the case (Stake, 1995, p 86). Donmoyer expands Stake’s understanding of the general relevance of the case by positing that what the case allows the reader to do, is to learn by substituting his or her own first hand experiences (2000, pp 56 – 61).

Punch (2005) defends case study by outlining three ways it can contribute especially in contexts where our knowledge is lacking, disjointed or non-existent. First, we can learn from the study of a case in its own right without needing to generalize from it. Second, only through the rich description and depth provided by case study can we understand

important features of new or problematic research areas. Third, the case can be used in conjunction with other research approaches to make important contributions (Punch, 2005, 147 & 148). What emerges is recognition of the role and importance of case study research particularly for areas where there has been little or no previous research; such as in the case of these bilingual children in state elementary schools in Cyprus. Ultimately in adopting case study, it is imperative that the researcher is concerned with both the boundaries and generalizability of the case, both of which have been accounted for in this study.

## 5.2 Epistemological and Ontological Influences on the Study

Guba and Lincoln (1994) express the importance of researchers delineating their ontological and epistemological position at the start of a study as the first step in understanding research. A struggle to define one's position is described as common to the research process (Grix, 2002) and consequently one often encounters words such as difficult, slippery, and tricky connected with expressions of epistemological positions. Indeed Crotty articulates the struggle to place a study as a maze more than a pathway, where as a researcher one experiences great tensions from the variety of definitions, interpretations and conflicting usage of terminology related to epistemological issues (2003, p 1 - 2). He asserts that the result of these tensions is that one must create from within the turmoil what one needs to best answer the questions being poised. Ultimately, Crotty's advice to work backwards to uncover the fundamental question of what type of knowledge I was seeking resonated with me. It helped me in acknowledging the importance of both the perspective and positionality of the researcher.

### 5.2.1 Perspective and Positionality.

Based on these ideas of researcher perspective and positionality, I acknowledge that as a researcher I am subjective, and as such my voice cannot be removed or placed beyond the study (Geertz. 1973). Additionally, I recognize my motivation for coming to this particular study was influenced by my own political and social agenda (as outlined in the previous chapter). Subsequently it was necessary for me to position myself within the frame of the research (Cohen *et. al*, 2000; Lester, 1999). As such I identify my own role in the collection of data, and concede that the process of data collection and the data are never free of bias and/or preconceptions. Rather research is always influenced by interpretations and meanings which are subjective to both researcher and research (Stanley and Wise 1993).

Additionally, I recognize social reality as constructed, relative and subjective (Clegg, 2009; Nueman, 1997), and I accept that as all meaning is constructed it will differ based on the individual. As a result, each individual may experience a separate meaning of the same phenomena, much like each individual experiences a shifting of self (identity) based on context and situation (Omoniyi, 2006). These different meanings ascribed by individuals are of equal important and should not be trivialized as they may be useful in providing otherwise inaccessible insight and understanding to social phenomena (Omoniyi, 2006, p 47 & 54). In my understanding, meaning is socially constructed (Bryman, 2001) so that data is not presented as truth in objective terms but rather as interpretations of a reality. This is not to say I hold to a “linguistic idealism” (Prado, 2010) believing there is no reality until it has been spoken about but rather, I that recognize the existence of a reality independent to the word, with this reality differing depending on the narrator.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that within the social construct of reality: institutionalism, power and politics will play a significant role in how we experience our realities. This



is because all discourse is political (Apple, 2003 & 2000). Punch (2005) argues politics suffuses all research much as it permeates reality. As a result, my research does not seek to uncover or discover knowledge which is ‘out there’ in the world. Rather I recognize that the research process I involve myself and my participants in will bring about an interpretation of knowledge and this interpretation will be influenced by context, power, social construction and politics (Punch, 2005; Apple, 2003, 2000; McGroarty, 2002; May, 2001). Additionally, the interpretative perspective I ascribe to accepts the varied and multiple viewpoints of all participants (Creswell, 2007) while accounting for the subjectivity of my role as researcher, and the construction of the data as a joint production between both researcher and participant (Creswell, 2007, p 24). Although for the purpose of this work I have delineated my personal position as researcher, I certainly do not claim to have ‘found the answers’. I believe grappling with philosophical perspectives and frameworks is an on-going process in which researchers continually question and challenge understandings of social reality and its relationship to both the researcher and research. As a result, there is not and perhaps should not be a stable unwavering position towards research. Finally, though I am involved in a process of interpretation, I also hold a larger political agenda which influences the research. As a result, a further component within my research is advocacy, critical educational research or research for social justice.

### 5.3 Critical Educational Research and its Influence on the Study

The study is certainly influenced by elements of what has been termed critical educational research (Apple, 2008, 2003, 2001) which has been viewed as encompassing a variety of research perspectives such as postmodernity, stance research – queer studies, feminism studies and advocacy among others. The origins of the perspective can be traced to traditional critical theory, stemming from the Frankfurt School and stressing a multidisciplinary approach to social theory (Kellner, 2003). It is founded on the works of Adorno, Horkheimer, Marx and Marcuse, and originally

emerged as a response to the “reified” structures of capitalism, concerned with issues of authority and injustice while advocating for social transformation. Habermas is recognized as having extended the concept, particularly within the philosophical realm, through his ideas on the connection of critical concerns to theories of how humans constitute their reality and experience it in terms of knowledge and guiding interests and ultimately the role of the language in this experience (Crotty, 2003, p 142). Freire proposed a critical theory which stepped beyond what he termed “empty verbalism” or “armchair activism” and advocated for praxis within “conscientization” (Freire, 1985, p 160) asserting that as human beings we should be involved not simply with thinking, but with thinking which is connected to action, as a means of continually working towards liberation and recreation (Freire, 1985, 1972a & 1972b; Crotty, 2003, pp 148-151). Lindlof and Taylor consider a postmodern critical theory which advocates that the researcher, “politicizes social problems by situating them in historical and cultural contexts, to implicate themselves in the process of collecting and analyzing data, and to relativize their findings” (2002, p 52). They stress traditional critical theory leaves researchers struggling to clarify or transform “encoded linkages between representation, power and the formation of identity” (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002, p 51), contending that struggles for meaning around cultural terms should be more than semantics. Ultimately critical research theory, whether it be postmodern or not, is credited with the delivery of a variety of theoretical perspectives which hold in common concepts about conducting research seeking to challenge the status quo as critical educational research. One perspective within this larger area is social justice research.

### 5.3.1 Definitions of Social Justice

“Equals should be treated equally and unequals unequally” (Aristotle)

As Gewirtz asserts, “Given the centrality of issues of social justice to so much policy-sociology research in education, surprisingly little attention has been devoted to

exploring precisely what we mean, or ought to mean when we talk about social justice” (2002, p 139). Social justice has been referred to as needing to be both a verb and a noun, as any definition must be about acting or doing as well as about theoretical descriptions (Griffiths, 2003). Within education the issue of justice encompasses concerns of inequality and distribution, and the overriding question of how these should be addressed. Clark (2006) highlights the need to advocate for social justice or justice as perplexing because one is unlikely to find people advocating for injustice. In speaking about the role of social justice in education, Clark states it is important to acknowledge that social justice is not about striving to equalize every inequality as not every inequality can or should be equalized. As a result, he stresses social justice in education is not about redistribution by way of what he terms “absolute equality” nor is it solely about difference (Clark, 2006, p 276), he continues by arguing that social justice in education is relevant only when differences lead to offence in a fundamental way as to what would constitute a just society. This is not to claim social justice in education will result in an “uncomplicated good” (Walker, 2003, p167) as the expectation is that education will result in justice and injustice, equality and inequality and what we should be concerned with is trying to understand when, why and how this takes place (Walker, 2003). In endeavoring to provide a characterization of what is a contested and slippery notion, the next section explores the components of social justice, plural concepts of justice including issues of distributed justice and the tensions which arise between the group and the individual including issues of neoliberal politics and my claim for social justice in this study.

#### 5.3.1.1 The Components of Social Justice

Social justice research contains a variety of components. In fact Walker posits that social justice in education is a patchwork of actions which unless stitched together result in an inability to state with confidence one particular action is more ‘just’ than another (2003, p 169). Primarily, social justice is political; it makes no claims of

neutrality. Rather it is concerned with including the role of social, historical and political contexts within the generation of knowledge. As such it explores issues of domination and oppression within societies (Young, 1990). Additionally, social justice research is temporal and spatial. Consequently it is difficult to identify as a grand narrative because what constitutes justice will shift and change with time (Griffiths, 1998, p 90). Furthermore social justice research recognizes knowledge as a social construction. As a result it asks questions about the relevance of knowledge including which sources are of relevance in knowledge production. In addition, social justice acknowledges the role of power in relation to research and contends both ‘who’ the researcher is (perspective) and ‘where’ the researcher is (positionality) will impact the research process and production of knowledge. In this way it draws attention to the importance of reflexivity in research and the delineation of the researcher’s social, political and value systems and their impact on the research. Finally, social justice research focuses on the “politics of recognition” (Taylor, 1997) and concern with uncovering not only who we are but also who we identify or do not identify with and how these social groups are perceived (Vincent 2003). In this way social justice research centers on the importance of recognition, representation, equality and respect as well as acknowledging difference (Griffiths, 2009).

#### 5.3.1.2 Plural Definitions of Social justice

Cribb and Gewirtz provide a conceptualization of social justice as plural focusing not only on distribution/redistribution but also on valorization and associational justice (2003, 19 & 26). They hazard this plurality has implications on two levels. First, it can cause a failure to engage with the tensions inevitably arising between the competing claims. Second, it may give rise to a critique from above, where there is a disconnection and lack of acknowledgement of the practical difficulties in bringing about a social justice agenda. Cribb and Gewirtz (2003) outline several dimensions of social justice such as that it is pluralistic, multi-dimensional and encompasses different types of good,

it is also context dependent and uses diffused and centralized models (Cribb and Gewirtz, 2003, p 16). It is notable that a pluralistic model will result in a complication of the social justice agenda which will be enlarged. As a result, there will be tensions between what must be acknowledged; leading to the distinction between evaluation and action collapsing (2003, p 17). The enlargement of the social justice agenda they refer to results in the inclusion of Bourdieu's ideas on the role of social and cultural capital and justice, which in turn give rise to Fraser's concept of "cultural justice" (1997). For Fraser, "cultural justice" is a politics of recognition seeking to eliminate cultural domination, non-recognition and disrespect directed at groups. Boyle *et al.*, (2009) propose the need to work holistically when dealing with difference, so all difference is accommodated for. They continue by acknowledging social justice is often used by varying groups to argue for oppositional goals (Boyle *et al.*, 2009, p 37) as groups take up the banner of social justice as a means of trying to secure their own representation, recognition and self-respect. Cribb and Gewirtz (2003) share this view and add the importance of recognizing there will often be tensions between redistribution and politics of difference as the two have differing aims – redistribution will be concerned with highlighting the differences of groups in order to gain recognition and ultimately achieve it; while a politics of difference will strive to work towards policies which minimize differentiating treatment towards varied groups. They call on Fraser's "redistribution – recognition dilemma" (1997, p 23) as a means of emphasizing the importance of recognizing this tension.

#### 5.3.1.3 Distribution in Social Justice Claims

Social justice has been viewed as involving either two types of justice distributed and relational, or three types distributional, cultural and association (Clark, 2006, p 273). The role of distribution in social justice is often a central concern to discussions of social justice (Boyles *et al.*, 2009). This is particularly because social justice is often defined in economic terms as an attempt to rectify or equalize economic distribution

(Boyles *et al.*, 2009; Vincent, 2003; Gewirtz, 2002; Young, 1990). The concept of the “distributive paradigm” drawn from Rawls and highlighted by Young (1990) focuses on social justice as concerned with an equitable distribution of economic goods: an issue of who gets what. This interpretation of social justice expounds the concept it is not simply a matter of distribution of economic goods on a one-person, one-share basis (Aristotle in Boyles *et al.*, 2009). As noted earlier in discussing redistribution we are not concerned with restitution for all difference in the hope of obtaining an absolute equality; but rather, redistribution only when these differences lead to offense of the fundamental concept of a just society (Clark, 2006, p 276).

Clark (2006) critiques the focus of social justice on solely distributive issues stating social justice must concern itself with rights and duties which are unlike economic goods and therefore cannot be treated as such. For Clark;

“Rights and duties are not things, like economic commodities or material resources, to be allocated to individuals. Rather, they are that which each and every one of us, by virtue of being members of particular groups, is entitled to have either as a welfare right or a non-interference right” (Clark, 2006, p 274).

He continues;

“Some of these are universal by virtue of our being human beings; others are legally granted in accordance with age criteria; some are special rights based on a level of maturity which parents might recognize in their children.”(*op. cit.*).

Adding to Clarks’ critique of the narrow interpretations of the concerns of social justice as overly absorbed with distributive issues, Vincent (2003) posits that by focusing on the idea of distribution or redistribution many social policies claim social justice while overlooking large categories of peoples who fall beyond the definition of those in need.

This debate is discussed by Young (1990) who contends what is needed is a definition of social justice which emphasizes the categories of domination and oppression. Young outlines five faces of oppression – exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural

imperialism and violence (Young, 1990). Young's definition can be viewed as a call to refocus social justice and allow difference and diversity to become central themes and is recognized as the creation of a politics of recognition (Vincent, 2003). Boyle *et al.* (2009) contend the outstanding social issue is one of recognition and self-respect as advocated by Howe (1997 in Boyle *et al.*, 2009) and suggest this is not something which can be addressed by distributive justice. Fraser (1997) meanwhile observes that what is needed is a joint or plural picture of how social justice is defined which includes both economic redistribution and cultural recognition.

#### 5.3.1.4 Tensions between the Individual and the Group

Certainly within the continuing discussion on social justice there remains tension between the recognition, respect and identity of the individual and that of the group. Griffiths (2003) states that in addressing this tension we must avoid the mistake of essentializing differences of race, gender, sexuality, identities etc. and as such acknowledge that one view will not represent all the members of the group. Furthermore, we need to accept that groups, though socially positioned, are composed of individuals and are therefore plural. This plurality means decisions made on the basis of what best fits a group will not necessarily be best for 'all' its members. What we are left with is a struggle over how to 'marry' these two seemingly conflicting ideas – advocating for the needs and recognition of a group, while accounting for the recognition of the individual. I would suggest what is important is less the marriage of the two than the acknowledgement of the role of the individual within the framework. Accordingly solutions, programs or platforms put forward in the name of the group are made in such a way as to recognize and provide space for those group members who are divergent, thereby, allowing all members to be 'seen'. On a practical basis I am not advocating an individuality of policy creation which seeks to address each individual's needs - a one-policy, one-person approach - as this would be impractical and anarchical. Nevertheless, I do believe we can address issues of social justice for groups while being

sensitive and responsive to the divergent voices which come from within the group itself. As Griffiths states;

“Social justice is a dynamic state of affairs that is good for the common interest, where that is taken to include both the good of each and the good of all, in an acknowledgement that one depends on the other.’ She continues, “It is dynamic in that it is never- could never be – achieved once and for all. So getting it is a matter of resolving possible tensions about the well-being of individuals, of whole societies and of social political groups” (2003, p 54).

### 5.3.2 Social Justice in Education and as a Response to Neoliberal Politics

As we have seen social justice can be viewed as opposition as it is concerned with equality while at the same time acknowledging difference. Perhaps as a consequence of this there are varied views on social justice and how it should be defined. For example Williamson *et al.* (2007) refer to one type of socially just education as providing the means of assimilation, by presenting the opportunity for individuals and groups to “climb the meritocratic ladder” while on the other hand social justice education can also be seen as concerned with creating respect for cultural and linguistic difference and a “flattening of the racial, ethnic and linguistic hierarchy” (Williamson *et al.*, 2007, p 195).

Apple (2001, 2000) interprets social justice in education as a response to neoliberal policies, post-colonial concerns and a “contested education” (Walker, 2003) where the idealized smooth talk of education drowns out the voices of others, and as a result the voices of the rich, powerful and privileged members of society are those heard. Paramount to this conceptualization of social justice is the recognition that even as social justice issues are contextualized issues related to who is powerful, legitimate and heard; they are also temporal so they will shift and change over time. Griffiths (2003) elaborates by observing that to be “seen” you must account for both who you are and



what you are. Thus issues of social justice will vary from context to context. Additionally, applying the concept of social justice to education is not a means of trying to wish away the issue of social class; rather, social justice in education is concerned with the right of all people to be recognized regardless of context or class. Finally, social justice views education as more than simply reproduction. As a result, a just education should be transformative, contextually sensitive, considerate of both who and what we are, and fundamentally concerned with initiating and implementing change. I would consider myself concerned with a social justice in education which resonates with the ideas outlined by Fraser who posits that cultural justice within social justice is based on the absence of cultural domination, non-recognition and disrespect (Fraser, 1997, p13) further discussed in the next section.

### 5.3.3 Social Justice Claims for This Group

With these conceptualizations of social justice in mind, I claim a perspective of social justice for the participants in this study while recognizing they may not ‘fit’ into a traditional category of a group ‘in need’ of justice. This is particularly because there are several areas where the participants differ from what is considered a traditional minority group in need of justice. First the participating children are largely from middle class families and are therefore not economically disadvantaged, a statement I make while appreciating the concerns of Vincent and Ball, who question the implication of people belonging to class categories in “uncomplicated”, “straightforward” ways (2006, p 5). The children generally come from two parent homes; with university educated parents who have professional or semi-professional occupations where they earn what would be considered a comfortable living (See 5.6.3 Research Participants). As a result, they do not constitute a group traditionally thought of as needing an advocate. Nevertheless, if we understand social justice to be more than distributional and therefore temporal, context specific and concerned with issues of recognition and respect, then in certain

contexts even those who in another context might be perceived as advantaged may be in need of the justice of recognition.

Secondly, the children, being of partial European or North American decent, are not members of a traditional minority group. However social justice claims are relevant here exactly because if we are serious about social justice involving the right of recognition, respect and inclusion then context, not ethnic background, will determine whether this is the case. The position of this particular group in Greek Cypriot society can be seen as analogous to claims for social justice made by Williamson *et al.*, (2007) in speaking about the integration of minority groups from Europe in the early twentieth century in America. Williamson *et al.*, contend for these European minority groups their ‘whiteness’ meant they were eligible to join the society provided they forfeited their native culture and language (*op. cit.*, 196). These experiences are similar to the situation of this group in the Greek Cypriot context – act, look and speak like a Greek Cypriot and ‘then’ you will belong.

Finally, in making a claim for social justice I acknowledge that within the hierarchy of immigrant or minority groups in Cypriot society and schools, the children would hold a higher status than many other minority children, particularly Pontian, Albanian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Russian or Turkish Cypriot children along with children of other immigrant communities – Sri Lankan, Pilipino and Indian (Theodorou, 2010; Angelides *et al.* 2003). This hierarchy would hold even in situations where children from these other groups might also have one Cypriot parent. This is because of the generally positive socio-economic conditions enjoyed by their families, along with the generally positive status of Westerners within the society compared to that of Eastern Europeans and Asian immigrants (Trimikliniotis, 2004). Moreover, the status enjoyed by English as an international and elite language (Pennycook, 1998; Toffelson, 1991, 2002) and therefore seen as desirable in this context – as opposed to Albanian or Tagalog, for example – will enhance this group’s positive standing. Perhaps because of this higher status the children have not been identified as a distinct group in the literature on

minority groups in Cypriot schools either with regard to academic achievement or language. The seminal study on bilingual children in state schools by Papapavlou unfortunately does not account specifically for this group and as such offers us limited insight into their experiences or needs (See 2.5.1 Bilingual Students in Cypriot Primary Schools).

## 5.4 Conducting Research with Children

### 5.4.1 Children's Agency and Participatory Agendas

Christensen and James (2001), Holloway and Valentine (2000), Christensen and Prout (2002), and Green and Hill (2005) contend that the foremost contemporary challenge of conducting research with children has been the shift from seeing children as objects to be studied, to seeing them as social actors involved in shaping their own social worlds and capable of making contributions to research which concerns them. Much of this shift resonates from the 1989 United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child (Cree *et al.*, 2002) which states, "Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child" (UNCRC, Article 12). This sentiment is shared by Morgan *et al.*, who state, "Children and young people have a right to be involved in decisions that affect them. This right extends from decisions affecting them as individuals to decisions that affect them as a collectivity" (2002, p 5). In acknowledging children's agency and rights, we embrace the view of children as social actors who until recently have experienced the same exclusion from legitimacy and participation within the research process as women (May, 2001, Christensen and Prout, 2002, Morgan *et al.*, 2002) and who are an "underestimated, underused resource whose scope and insight like that of women's could offer much for the research process" (Alderson, 2000, p 253). Consequently, child-centred research has become the vanguard of research concerned with the representation of issues and concerns faced by children and young people.

#### 5.4.2 Ethics and Research with Children

Christensen and Prout (2002) extend Bauman's contention that within our modern society the central challenge is the responsibility for others (minorities) to a responsibility towards children, stating that as researchers, we should be striving for a sense of "ethical symmetry" (2002, p 482) where the researcher takes as a starting point that the ethical relationship between researcher and participant will not be influenced by generationalism (Mayall, 2000). For Christensen and Prout (2002), this ethical symmetry does not hold that there are no differences between researching with children and researching with adults, but rather, that these relationships should be influenced by the same ethical principles regardless of the differences in age, social maturity or power held by the participants and/or the researcher(s). Consequently any differences in the research should arise from values, interests, experiences and everyday routines of children, not from the researchers own preconceived ideas of what these differences may be.

In striving to achieve ethical research with children, an important area to consider is how we incorporate children's opinions and voices within methodological choices. This will be demonstrated in the roles or participation children have in the research process. Alderson (2001) refers to this involvement as like the rungs of a ladder; whereas Christensen and Prout, (2002) view the process as a continuum where there are several levels of possible involvement. Whether a ladder or a continuum, the important issue is for researchers to strive to avoid what Alderson refers to as "tokenism" (2001, p145) which materializes when claims of children's involvement are made, but in practicality there is not true involvement. As a result there is a pretext of consultation with the reality that children are assigned tasks while the adults imitate sharing decisions with them. Additionally, Punch (2002a) and Davis (1998) recommend that children's involvement in research be reflexive, allowing for children's voices to permeate the

research process at all levels – designing, collecting data and interpreting. For this they believe the researcher must work to remove inherent ideas of adult superiority and belief, and involve him or herself in an intrinsic understanding of the child's world. Punch (2002a) views this assumption as presenting methodological problems for researchers because although we were all once children, only those who 'are' children can be privy to an accurate understanding of contemporary childhood. The rest of us are simply engaged in the feelings of wistfulness and nostalgia associated with our own vanished childhoods, which coerce us into believing that we still hold membership in this group. This illusion invariably concludes with problematic issues when we need to acknowledge our outsider status. Nonetheless, our ability to acknowledge and accept outsider status to childhood is fundamental in our recognition and encouragement of children's direct participation in the research process; if we do not accept our outsider status we will continue to falsely believe that by virtue of our own nostalgic memories we are privy to an insight and understanding of childhood which is a fallacy.

A second area of ethical concern in research with children is our ability as adult researchers to abandon our inherent sense of superiority over children. Mayall (2000) suggests there are two approaches to research with children, one which assumes the superiority of adult knowledge, and another which approaches information about children from their own experiences. For research to be effective, it is essential to recognize that it is only through current contemporary consultation with those who 'are' children that we can glean, even fleetingly, the smallest understanding of what childhood means today. This requires us to shift the approach of researching children and childhood to a perspective which actively recognizes children's ownership of the knowledge of childhood. Crucial to this ethical acknowledgment is the appreciation that the research process is unlikely to be equal (Alderson, 2001). This is often because research is usually the impetus of an adult researcher (Christensen, 2002), and also because there are certain inherent practical difficulties in researching with children (Cree *et al.*, 2002). However, although the participation of children in research can be difficult to sustain for a variety of reasons - lack of motivation or interest, issues with

gatekeepers, access, scheduling etc. - these issues should not be used as a barrier or excuse for a lack of an attempt to involve children in researching their own lives.

A final area of concern when conducting research with children is the concept of trustworthiness (Discussed in detail in Section 5.7.3.1). In this research, I view children as competent social actors whose opinions and experiences are just as valid as those of adults and who are therefore just as trustworthy as respondents as any adult participant would be. Consequently, interviewing children did not present any philosophical barriers for me as researcher, and the issue of truthfulness in terms of interview data collected from children was therefore no more of a concern than it would have been were all the participants adult (See *Children & Society* Vol. 10, No. 2 for a review of research on children's experiences and perspectives). Nonetheless in order to address concerns over trustworthiness and validity of the research, I implemented methodological practices consistent with researching with children and conducted multiple interviews as a means of acquiring some respondent validation of both the interview data and artefacts.

The shift from children being viewed simply as subjects to be studied, to the recognition of the child as valued social actors, has meant that researchers working with children have begun addressing the many varied components and issues concerned with researching with children such as: children's agency, children's voices, children's representation, and reflexive approaches to researching with children. Thus child centred research has become the vanguard in research concerned with the depiction of children and young people and their voices.

## 5.5 Background to the Study – the pilot

Hill argues that in research with children, what is needed are more studies which allow for the inclusion of children's views on methods, particularly if we agree that

information generated in the communication of research should be the result of joint researcher-respondent interaction (2006, p 69). In an attempt to explore this, prior to the main study of this work I conducted a preliminary group interview to solicit children's ideas and responses on a variety of common data gathering methods used with children (See Appendix 2 for the Pilot Study). The results were used to inform the choices made in this larger study. One of the main themes which emerged was that just as adults differ in their preferences, so too do children (Also see Punch 2002a & 2002b). Accordingly, as researchers we should consider addressing issues of choice in data gathering methods used with children. In addition, issues of representation, privacy and voice also emerged, with the children expressing particular concern over how others would perceive them. Ultimately the data from the group interview were instrumental in informing choices made for the subsequent study where a mixed methodology was followed (Hill, 2006, p 76).

## 5.6 The Study

Once the data from the group interview had been examined, decisions were made on the main study's methods, with interviews selected as the main means of information collection. This was decided upon for two reasons. First the results from the pilot had indicated a preference for this by the children. Secondly, it was deemed an appropriate method to collect data on experience where providing a voice was considered important. Silverman refers to "interview-as-local-accomplishment" (2006, p 104) where what is said and understood is intrinsically tied to where, how and to whom it is said (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995), in response to concerns raised about talking to adults/strangers, interviews would be multiple, to help the children and researcher establish rapport, and take place either individually, with a parent, friend or sibling present depending on the preference of the child. Additionally interviews would take place at a location of the child's choice outside the school setting. Finally, a mixed method or mosaic approach would be used to collect artefacts from the children. Thus

each child would have choice over if and what they were interested in producing for the study.

### 5.6.1 The Research Questions

Once the group interview data had been explored, the study set out to investigate the experiences of this group of children in state primary schools from their own perspectives. Consequently the following research question was posited:

What do Greek/English bilingual child report about their experiences of language and identity in the state primary education system in the Republic of Cyprus?

This led to a series of sub-questions which fell into two main categories: the children's experience of identity at school and the children's experiences of language at school. These sub-questions were:

Identity:

2. What do the children report about how they experience their identit(ies) in the school context?
  - a. What do they report about how they perceive themselves in the school context?
  - b. What do they report about how others perceive them in the school context?
  - c. What do they report about how the school responds to their non-Cypriot identity?

Language Use:

2. What do the children report about how they experience their bilingualism at school?
  - a. What do these children report about how they manage their two languages at school?
    - i. When, where and with whom are they using Greek and/or English at school?
  - b. What do they report about how the school and or teachers respond to their bilingualism?



### 5.6.2 Case Study as a Method

Case Study was chosen as the most suitable method through which to collect the data for the study as although accommodating to a collective experience it also allowed for the experience of the individual to be explored and was consistent with the use of interviews. Case Study fit well with the overall emancipatory, participatory and advocacy agendas of the study (See 5.3 Critical Educational Research) and is seen as an appropriate method to use in real life contexts (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2003; Bassey, 1999; Merriam, 1998) and particularly in studies where the goal is to open up the field for discussion (Yin, 2003) one of the fundamental objectives of this study. Additionally, as case study can be considered idiographic (Creswell, 2007), it tied with the study's aims of affecting policy and illuminating an under-researched area while not making grandiose claims of generalization to further populations.

Data collection using case study design allows for a variety of tools to be used, as Rowley (2002) states, "typically case studies draw on multiple sources of evidence. These include documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artefacts" (2002, p 23). Consequently this research is an Instrumental Collective Case Study using interviews (Matocha, 1992 in Punch, 2005, p 143; Stake, 1995, 2005; Yin, 1994) while also involving the collection of data through physical artefacts collected from the participants in the form of Language Use Charts, Sentence Completion Exercises and brochures. Additionally interviews were also conducted with the children's parents; however this data was not used as a source of direct comparison with the interview data collected from the children who were considered the main participants of the study (See Section 5.6.3). This decision was taken as it was important data remained focused on presenting the experiences and voices of the children as they were central to the research questions posed by the study. This meant that the case developed with a focus on presenting the voices and experiences of the children from their own perspectives, an important facet of this particular case which was exploratory in nature. Furthermore, the use of artefacts in

conjunction with the selection of multiple participants and multiple interviews with each allowed the case to develop a “chain of evidence” (Rowely, 2002, p 23) which aided in the reliability and trustworthiness of the study.

Also important to the development of this case was the decision not to interview teachers. This decision was taken as a response to the research questions posed which sought to highlight the experiences and understandings of language and identity at school from the perspective of the children as respondents (See Section 3.2.1). The rationale for this was twofold, first conducting teacher interviews, though certainly insightful, would have shifted the focus of the research to one which reflected what Thiessen (2007) and Erickson & Shultz (1997) refer to as more ‘teacher centered’ focusing on the perceptions and opinions of teachers of the students’ experiences rather than on those put forward by the children themselves. And secondly as a researcher I contend that children’s voices are legitimate, informed and authentic and children as participants in research are therefore capable of articulating their own experiences without the need to have these experiences validated by adults (See Fielding, 2001).

### 5.6.3 Research Participants

#### 5.6.3.1 Demographics of the Group

Eight children – five girls and three boys - and their parents took part in the study between February 2009 and July 2010. The children were all Greek/English bilinguals and attended state primary schools, which are monolingual in Greek, in Cyprus. All the children have one parent who is a Greek Cypriot national and another who is a national from an English-speaking country – America, Canada or The United Kingdom. The children of repatriated Cypriots were not included in the study. All the children were born in Cyprus; two have non-Cypriot fathers while six have non-Cypriot mothers. All were between the ages of ten and twelve at the time of the study, and all but one were in the upper school grades four through six. Additionally, all but two had exclusively

attended Greek language primary school since formal schooling had begun. The families were identified through social network snowballing (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p 28), where contact with one participant often led to the recommendation of another. As a member of this community I knew some of the families and children prior to the study. The families of the children are all permanently resident in Cyprus with the non-Cypriot parents having from eight to over twenty-five years of residency in the country. All of the children came from two-parent families, and all had siblings who had attended or attend state elementary school in Cyprus.

#### 5.6.3.2 Socioeconomic Status of the Participants

The participating families would be characterized as middle class and enjoy the varying degrees of social and financial mobility that one would associate with the middle class (Apple, 2001); as such none of the children would be classified as coming from an economically disadvantaged home. The families could be characterized as both professional and semi-professional, several of the mothers and one of the fathers were teachers; others were bankers, business people, accountants, mechanics and administrative assistants. All but two of the mothers worked outside of the home, and two of the fathers although resident in Cyprus travelled extensively outside of the country for work. Importantly, the fact that the participating children were from the middle class, was not a selective feature of the study but a by-product of the linguistic parameters. A result of this socioeconomic status is the group can be viewed as having more *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1994) and are presumed to be more agile at navigating, operating, interpreting and using the educational system to their own benefit, a factor which did present as relevant within the findings. However within this concept of *habitus*, it is equally vital to recognize the outsider status of the non-Cypriot parent for whom this navigation was often more challenging due to issues of culture and language. Both of these factors emerged as relevant in the data.

#### 5.6.4 The Context – state primary schools in Cyprus

The children interviewed for the study did not all attend the same school. However; all the schools were located within the Nicosia district, two children attended schools in villages – the growing suburb areas surrounding Nicosia - within the district but outside of the centre of Nicosia while the others attended schools within the city. The variety of schools attended meant that although the children were interviewed about their experiences of school, school was not a unified physical context. The exceptions to this were two girls who attended the same school within Nicosia, and a boy and girl who are siblings and attended the same school. The decision to include children from a variety of schools within Nicosia was not only due to the practicalities of finding participants for the study, but also because although recently there has been an increase in research regarding the experience of non-Cypriot children in state elementary schools in Cyprus, (Theodorou, 2010; Zembylas, 2010a and 2010b; Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2009) much of this work has been focused in schools where there is an identifiable concentration of non-Cypriot students; with the schools often located within the city centres of Nicosia and Limassol (Panayiotopoulos & Nicolaidou, 2007) or within the designated Zone of Educational Priority delineated by the Ministry of Education and Culture. These schools receive additional focus and support from the MoEC particularly with regards issues of multiculturalism and language learning (Annual Report, 2011, p 239). Including children from a variety of schools provided for a broader realm of experiences. Of note here is that although referring to issues of multiculturalism within policy documents such as the Annual Reports the MoEC does not put forward any conclusive definition of multiculturalism such as for example a definition based on Banks (2007) “Five Dimensions”; nor is multiculturalism in Cyprus explicitly defined within the literature from the MoEC where it is instead connected to the idea of the assimilation and adsorption of non-Cypriots into the fabric of Cypriot society most often through the teaching of Greek as a second language. (See Section 7.1.5 for additional discussion on multiculturalism in Cyprus)

Focusing on this group of children was important because even though this demographic of children from mixed marriages is growing (Statistical Services 2009 Report on Marriages between Cypriots and Non-Cypriots); it has not been greatly explored within the Cypriot context. This may be because much of the research taking place in and around schools in Cyprus has tended to focus on either the perspectives of teachers (Papamichael, 2008), Greek and/or Turkish Cypriot students' perspectives, Greek Cypriot and immigrant children's perspectives of each other (Spyrou, 2001, Zembylas, 2010a & 2010b) or general attitudes towards racism (Trimikliniotis, 2004 & Theodorou, 2010). Consequently it can be claimed that these children are an under-researched group in the Cypriot context, and this study constitutes the first of its kind to focus specifically on this faction of children. Ultimately the lack of research into this group can be seen to be due to the focus on issues of integration and acceptance of immigrant and migrant children within the school system, an issue which has been viewed as one of the most demanding in education (Annual Report, 2010).

### 5.7 Data Gathering Methods – interviews, artefacts and language charts

In order to provide a depth of data and context for the study, a variety of methods for data collection were used. The main method was the use of multiple in-depth interviews conducted with all children and also with their parents. Additionally to map language use patterns of participants Language Use Charts were completed by all children and their parents. Finally a variety of artefacts were developed and collected from the children (See Appendix 5 for samples templates of artefacts). Each method is discussed in detail in the following sections.

### 5.7.1 Rational for Using Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted as the main method for data collection for several reasons. First, the method sat well with the overall aims of the study to explore the experiences of this group of children from their own perspective (Alderson, 2008; Mayall, 2008; Roberts, 2008). In addition, as stated earlier, results of the group interview had shown that the children were receptive to interview and in several cases concluded that they would prefer to “just talk” (See Appendix 3 for details of the Pilot Study). Finally, Rubin & Rubin refer to what they term responsive interviewing as a model which relies on the interview process as being an interpretive one in which the interviewer and interviewee develop a relationship throughout the interview process and where the goal of the process is depth not breadth in providing understanding (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p 30). During the interview the interviewer strives to elicit from the participant examples, narratives, stories and explanations which are put together by the researcher. These are constructed over the interview process and additionally by the interpretations of the interviewer (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p 37).

Scourfield *et al.* contend that trying to research the area of identity is problematic as we are not able to simply observe children in the act of identity, as identity is slippery and abstract (2006, p 28). They posit that identities are too complex and contingent to be expressed by direct questions as in for example a closed interview or quantitative method. They propose, therefore, that the exploration of identity be allowed to emerge through methods allowing for children’s expressions without an interaction which is too artificial or awkward. They call on Athinas’ concept that researchers must seek to “tease out” the answers with reference to identity by allowing subjects to talk about themselves and their lived experience (Athinas, 2002 in Scourfield *et al.*, 2006, p 28). The use of open ended qualitative interview techniques would allow for this teasing out to take place within the interview process of this study.

### 5.7.2 The Interview – multiple, in-depth interviews

Prior to the start of the study, interview questions were piloted with one family and changes and adaptations to the process were made. Additionally, the pilot interview allowed for the identification of procedural issues such as ensuring there was enough time to go through the consent forms in person before the interviews and ensuring that the Language Use Chart was completed in advance (See Appendix 4, for Sample Consent Forms, Information Letters etc.).

In a response to this need to “tease out” the data, information was collected via multiple semi-structured in-depth interviews. Interview data have been characterized as inseparable from location, manner and person(s) (Holstein and Gubrium, 2004) consequently three interviews were conducted with each child; the exception to this was with two siblings where scheduling concerns resulted in the first and second interviews being combined. In total twenty two in-depth interviews were conducted with the eight children in the study. This multiple contact with the children allowed for the ‘teasing out’ of issues as well as the opportunity to develop rapport which contributed to more in-depth discussion.

Finally the children were offered the choice to include a parent or sibling in the interview process with the majority of the children choosing to be interviewed alone. However, some interviews did take place in the presence of parents who either requested of their child that they be allowed to stay, or simply remained quietly in the room during the interview. No child chose to formally include a friend or a sibling. Interviews lasted approximately twenty to thirty minutes and ended once it was clear the child had begun to lose interest or when a child asked for the interview to be concluded, something two children did during the course of the research.

### 5.7.2.1 The Interview Process and Questions

Interviews usually began with general chatter about school, upcoming birthdays or other non- intimidating subjects in an attempt to further develop rapport with the children and to ease nerves. In addition, prior to the start of each interview I reiterated issues of confidentiality, solicited confirmation of the child's willingness to be interviewed and of active choice to participate in the study. Furthermore children were reminded that they were in control of the interview process and could end the interview whenever they wanted, that they did not have to answer all the questions, that there were no right or wrong answers, and that they could request information be left off the recording – something which one child asked for. Finally, I simplified my language, used first names, offered definitions and queried understanding of concepts raised within the interview process such as the understanding of bilingual for example. All of this worked towards following good practice with interviewing children (O'Kane, 2000, p 150) and allowed the interview to flow into conversation as much as possible (Kvale, 1996, p 42). Initial interview questions stemmed directly from the research questions and the information collected from the Language Use Charts (See Appendix 6, for Sample Interview Questions). Questions were developed as loosely structured main questions which could be reworded and explained as needed and which were then funnelled into probes (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

### 5.7.2.2 Transcribing and Securing Interview Data

All interviews were digitally recorded with several copies made and secured. Transcriptions were created by me using Silverman's Simplified Transcription Symbols (2005, p 376) and adhered to the idea that one includes in the transcription the level of



detail deemed necessary for the study. As such pauses and hesitations were noted in the transcription when they were considered significant. Each set of interviews was transcribed and/or reviewed prior to conducting the subsequent interview so themes and topics for discussion could be drawn out for the next interview in a continual funnelling progression. Finally, all participants were assigned aliases to assist with anonymity.

#### 5.7.2.3 Artefacts – The Mosaic Approach/The Secret Box

Along with the interviews, the children were requested to participate in the study by producing a series of artefacts. The first was a Language Use Chart (Baker, 2006) which was sent along with the initial consent forms to the families to be completed prior to the first interview (Appendix 5, for Sample Language Use Charts). The Chart was designed to document the language use of the children and their parents as they recorded it by asking them to fill in when, where, with whom and how often they used Greek and English. The objective was to collect background information on the language use of the children and parents which could then be incorporated into the interviews. The Charts were not intended to be used as a measure of bilingualism, but to indicate domains of language use and to ensure that the children were bilingual by observing the more contemporary understanding of bilinguals as a person using both languages on a regular basis (Grosjean, 2010, p 24) – a parameter of the study. These Charts were piloted with one family prior to the main study and changes made. These were structural issues on the Language Use Chart for Parents where the categories of speaking to siblings and parents were removed.

In addition to the Charts and in an attempt to strengthen the data and provide further validity, the children were asked to produce other artefacts for the study. The initial concept was based on the “mosaic approach” (Clark & Moss, 2001) or a “secret box” (Punch, 2002) in which children choose the type of artefact they want to produce. The

idea of offering a choice of what to create also resulted from the findings of the group interview which revealed that there was considerable variance in terms of the media a child might select to express him or herself in. Additionally, it was felt that this choice would encourage the research to be more responsive to the contribution and agency of the children who had agreed to participate in the study (Hill, 2007, 2006; Mayall, 2000). Accordingly, at the end of the first interview each child was asked to prepare an artefact of his or her choice for the next meeting. This was described to the children as a piece of writing, drawing, poem, song, pictures or video on the topic “Me at school.”

Unfortunately, the results of the artefact production were disappointing, as even with phone calls to request parents encourage or remind their child to complete the artefact, by the second interview only one child had produced an artefact. The exact reason for the failure of this attempt to involve the children in a more unrestricted and participatory approach to the study is unclear. However there were likely many factors at play. Foremost may be that no matter how much a participatory approach to the research was desired, ultimately this was not what emerged. Although the children were willing and eager to share their experiences and expressed support of the research, I believe they viewed the research as belonging to the researcher. This may have resulted from the children being interviewed individually outside of the school context which may have led to a lack of connection or sense of group ownership over the study, or perhaps greater involvement at the design stage was needed so the children felt more connected to the study itself. Added to the possible lack of ownership felt was the reality that the children lead tremendously programmed and busy lives, and just as an adult might view a request to complete yet another form as overwhelming, so too did the children. Whatever the reason there is no question that the attempt at being non-prescriptive in terms of the artefact production was unsuccessful.

The failure of this approach led me to re-evaluate my methodology and I settled on the idea of using a template for a brochure which I entitled “My Advice for a New Bilingual Bicultural Child in my School”. This seemed appropriate for several reasons. First, by this time I had already conducted two interviews with most of the children and I was in the process of winding up the interview process. Consequently, the idea of a brochure where children offered advice resonated as a positive way to provide closure to the interview process, especially since this was also to be a major theme of the third interview. Additionally, the brochure would be offered as a template so the children could decide how involved in the production of the artefact they wanted to be. Again the stipulation was that this was not prescriptive and it was emphasized that completing the brochure was not required. Six children agreed to take the template to complete while two opted out immediately. Eventually, by the final interview only four templates were completed and collected.

#### 5.7.2.4 Parental Interviews

In addition to interviews with children, interviews were also conducted with parents. The decision to conduct interviews with parents was twofold. Primarily, after the pilot and first interview with the children, it became increasingly clear that for purposes of depth of the case additional information about the children would be valuable. This was important in drawing a fuller, deeper understanding of who the children and their families were and how they experienced the school system. Next, the approach fit well with the “mosaic approach” where, as discussed in the previous section, additional data from other sources is collected. This would encompass the development of a multi-method approach to listening to children, one which would bring together data from children and their families (Clark & Moss, 2001, p 11). As a result, all but two of the parents were interviewed twice, once after the second child interview and again after the final child interview; in total twelve parental interviews were conducted, five with both parents present and the rest with mothers alone. Interviewing the mothers alone was not

a methodological choice but rather a response to availability and scheduling issues connected with interviewing parents, especially given that a couple of the fathers were often out of the country on business.

It is important to stress that collecting data from the parents through interviews was not an attempt to cross check accuracy of children's reporting but was rather an attempt to add depth and richness to the data collected as parents were able to explore experiences as well as provide additional context and background for the children's experiences. Ultimately information from the parental interviews, though used to inform the children's data, was not directly contrasted against the interview data from the children. This decision was made because it was deemed more important to remain focused on the children's reporting of their experiences. However, as stated previously, the parental data was valuable in enriching the data collected from the children. Consequently parental interview data is included in summary only when there is a direct connection and relevance to what has been expressed by the children.

### 5.7.3 Ethical Concerns in the Research

An overriding concern of research with children is the ethical framework the research will establish in working with a vulnerable group (UNCRC 1989; Alderson and Morrow, 2004). To respond to this concern I followed a series of steps to create a child-centred, ethical and responsive research design (see Section 5.4 Conducting Research with Children). First, I initiated contact by briefing parents on the importance of consultation without coercion, to establish whether the child was willing to participate. Second, I prepared detailed consent forms for parents outlining issues of confidentiality, privacy, data collection, and the objectives of the study (Appendix 4). Following Alderson I also prepared a simplified consent form for the children, so consent was "multilateral, child centered" (2000, p 248). Before each interview I orally briefed children on their right to refuse to participate and to withdraw from the study at any

time, about anonymity and control over the interview process (Greene & Hogan, 2005; David *et al.*, 2001; Mauthner, 1997). For confidentiality, I outlined to the children as Alderson and Marrow state “No one has an absolute right to confidentiality and a breach may be justified in rare cases, if it is thought that someone is in serious danger.” (Alderson and Marrow, 2004, p 43) and explained that were we to encounter such a situation I would follow the procedure of encouraging them to talk to an adult who could help or else agreeing to speak on their behalf (Alderson and Marrow, 2004, p 43). To address inherent issues of power (Morrow and Richards, 1996) we used first names; while the child chose the interview location and whether he or she would be interviewed alone or in the presence of a parent or sibling (Alderson and Marrow, 2004; Kay *et al.*, 2003). Finally, I applied the Guidelines of the British Educational Research Association on ethical research (BERA, 2004) and completed the ethics forms from the University for outlining the procedures for data protection and disposal, all of which helped in creating a child sensitive ethic within the study.

#### 5.7.3.1 Trustworthiness of the Research

Trustworthiness as defined within the interpretive paradigm is composed of four factors: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000) and is considered the alternative to the validity and reliability objectives put forward by more positivist approaches to research. These components of trustworthiness have been applied in this work for example, issues of credibility, were addressed in consent forms and disclosure about the research and researcher. In fact these criteria were used to inform all decisions within the research process.

Throughout this process, I was aware of the criticisms by positivists towards this type of qualitative work, and as a result I endeavoured to address these criticisms from within my own paradigm (Maxwell, 2002; Lincoln and Guba, 1985) by implementing as much as possible the descriptive criteria for trustworthiness in qualitative research as outlined

by Shenton (2004, p 73). In implementing these goals, I delineated the parameters and objectives of the study, the choice of participants and the position of the researcher and also devoted considerable time, effort and thought to data collection methods, procedures and methodologies which were responsive to the research and the respondents. I included ‘thick description’ of all stages of the research process which would allow for other researchers to follow my research trail. Additionally, I incorporated Dervin’s concept of “circling reality” by including a wide spectrum of interview data through multiple interviews with respondents and by interviewing family members as well. This allowed me to involve myself in insight development between interviews as data was reflected upon. Further multiple in-depth interviews meant there was a facet of respondent validation to the data. Additionally in selecting both case study and a qualitative approach I fully acknowledged the role of the individual, and the value of every child’s experience to the data generated. Finally, I recognized and made explicit my researcher assumptions, beliefs, shortcomings and their effects on the research by outlining my context, personal stance and status as both an insider and outsider within the research (See Chapter Four). Once these issues of method, methodology and trustworthiness had been addressed the study was undertaken with the results discussed in the following chapter.

## 5.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has examined the parameters and limitations of the study. The chapter has explained decisions taken regarding methodological and epistemological choices for the research and theories such as social justice and participatory research with children which have influenced the choices made. It has delineated the parameters for participation in the study and the influences on this participation, thereby providing boundaries for the case. The chapter has examined how data were collected and recorded and measures taken to safeguard this data. Additionally it has outlined ethical and trustworthiness concerns, important issues in establishing the reliability for the

study. We now move on to the Data and Analysis Chapter, which explores the information collected within the themes arising from the interview data, sentence completion task and brochures and Language Use Charts.

## Chapter Six: Data and Analysis

### 6.0 Introduction

The following chapter analyses the data generated for the study. Data were collected via multiple, in-depth interviews with both children and their parents. As the purpose of the study was to explore the experiences of children, parental interviews were conducted to complement interviews with the children, not as a means of cross reference or confirmation. In addition to interview data, two other forms of data were collected: Language Use Charts were distributed to all children and parents to map general language use (Baker, 2006) and artefacts were produced by children in the form of a sentence completion task and a brochure with the title, “My Advice for a New Bilingual Bicultural Kid at my School”. These additional sources of data are analysed and discussed concurrent to the interview data.

### 6.1 The Language Charts – Rationale

Attempts to quantify levels of bilingualism in individuals are often controversial (Baker, 2006) as it is difficult to delineate how much of a language a person speaks and understands particularly as bilingual ability and language use are context specific and shifting (See Section 3.3). Subsequently, the distribution of Language Use Charts (Baker, 2006, pp 32 -33), hereafter the Charts, was not done in an effort to measure language competence but rather to create a general picture of when, where and with whom language was being used. This would provide confirmation that the children were using both languages on a daily basis, a parameter of the study and of the definition of bilingual applied to the study. Additionally, the data collected from the Charts added to the trustworthiness of the study, as this data created a profile of language use in the children and their families, employed to enrich the interview data.



Moreover, the information collected via the Charts provided a platform about language use from which questions for the initial interview were framed (Appendix 6, Sample Interview Questions). Finally, information collected in the Charts was useful in informing the results particularly in terms of issues of school achievement and language, a factor which became relevant as the data unfolded.

#### 6.1.1 Language Use Charts Data

As such language charts and consent forms were distributed to all participants to be completed prior to the first interview. As stated earlier the Chart format was adapted from Baker (2006, pp 32 & 33) and his advice that an important aspect of using language charts is to provide a space to record frequency of language use along with the categories of when, where and with whom the languages are used was applied. Baker additionally advises that the question of why should be added; however, this was not done as issues related to why would be covered during the interview process. The Charts presented domains of language use in a variety of situations both at school and at home and asked parents and children to choose on a scale which language they used in the particular situation. The frequency choices ranged from ‘Almost always in Greek’, ‘In Greek more than English’, ‘In about the same amount of Greek and English’, ‘In English more than Greek’, to ‘Almost always in English’ (See Appendix 5, Language Use Charts).

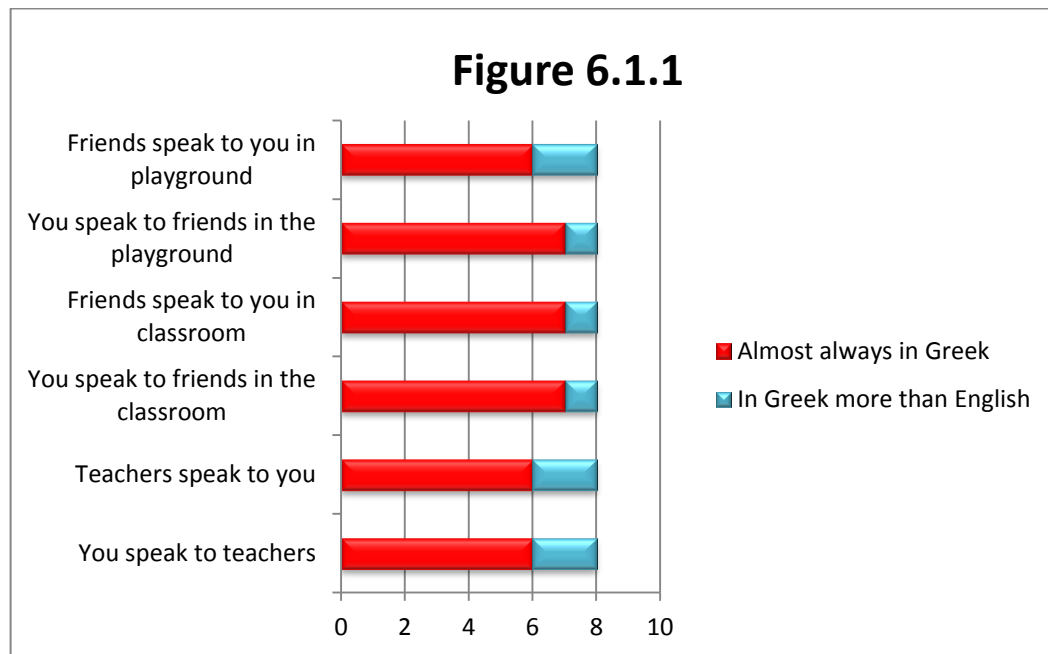
Before distributing the Charts, they were piloted with one family after which slight adjustments were made. These changes were particularly to the categories of language use on the parents’ charts. As a result the categories of ‘speaking to parents, brothers and sisters’ were removed and language used ‘at work’, language you ‘speak to your in-laws’ and to ‘others you socialize with’ were added in their place. In total eight

language charts were collected from the children and ten from parents: eight mothers and two fathers; this broke down into Charts from six non-Cypriot parents: one father and five mothers, and four Cypriot parents: two mothers and two fathers. Generally there were few issues with collecting this data as the Charts were sent by email or delivered to participants in person ahead of time. The only issue which arose was that because the Charts had been produced in English, there were a couple of children who did not possess the literacy skills to complete the Charts on their own and their answers were written in by their parents. In retrospect the Charts should have been produced in both Greek and English. Data from the charts is presented in the next section; data from the children's language charts is examined first, followed by the data from the parental charts and then a short comparison of the two.

#### 6.1.1.1 The Children's Language Use Charts Data

Data collected in the children's Charts fell into two categories: language use at school and language use at home. The results showed that the language used at school was clearly Greek, with six children reporting that they 'Almost always' spoke to teachers in Greek and two that they spoke 'In Greek more than in English'. Additionally, seven children reported that they 'Almost always spoke Greek' with friends in the classroom, and in the playground with one child reporting 'In Greek more than English' for this category. When looking at the same categories in terms of who speaks to you? Six children reported the teacher spoke 'Almost always in Greek' and two, 'In Greek more than English'. Speaking to friends in the classroom did not change and speaking to friends on the playground shifted only by one with six children reporting 'Almost always in Greek' and two 'In Greek more than English' (See Figure 6.1.1 below). The data presented a picture of bilingual children immersed in an almost exclusively Greek speaking environment at school.

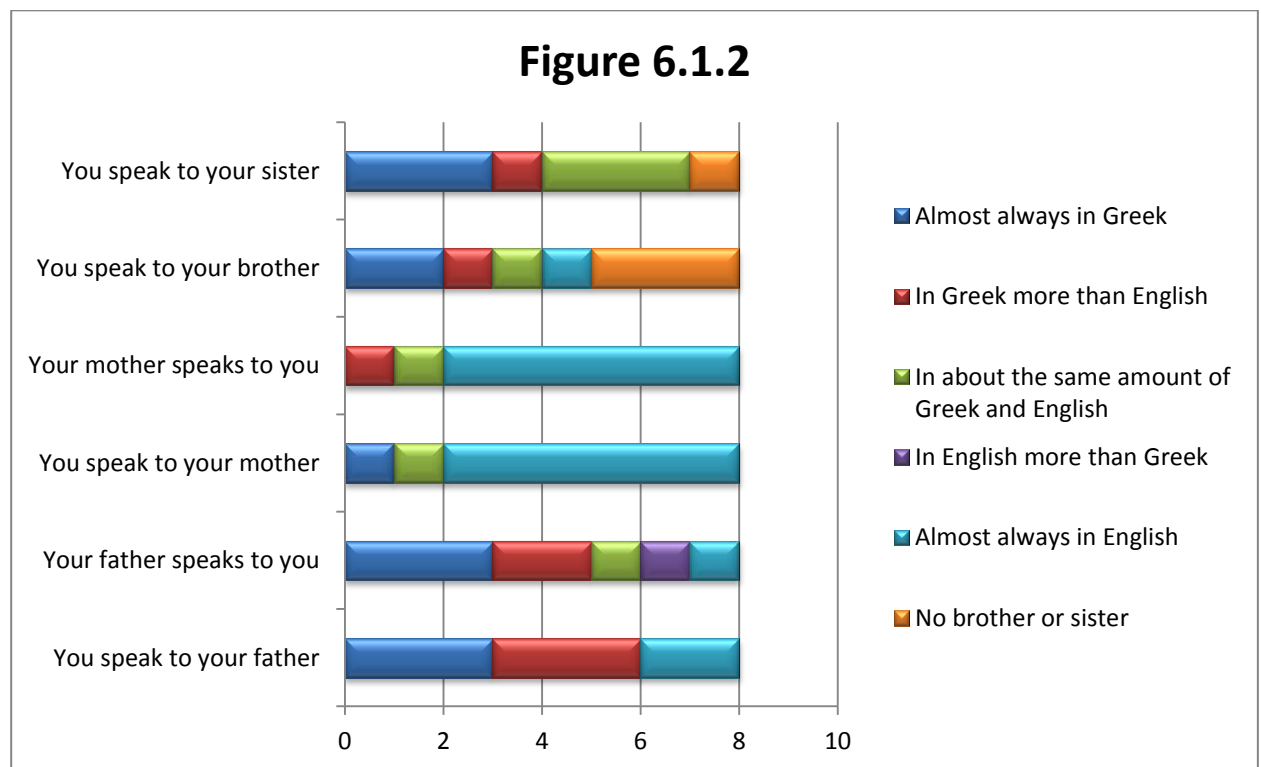
### Children's Language Charts: language use at school



There was also a distinction in language use with parents with the deciding factor being the parent's first language (See Romaine, 1995, p 19 & 20 for a discussion on mother tongue, and 2004 for multilingual communities). Here, though there was a slight difference between fathers and mothers. In speaking to their fathers, three children said they spoke 'Almost always in Greek', three 'In Greek more than English' and the two children with non-Cypriot fathers reported 'Almost always in English'. However when the children reported on what language they spoke to their mothers, the six with non-Cypriot mothers all reported 'Almost always in English' and one each for the Cypriot mothers in 'Almost always in Greek' and 'In about the same'. This indicated that most of the children assumed a more selective language choice with the parent for whom Greek was an additional language, communicating more exclusively in the other language with their non-Cypriot parent. This may be due in some part to the more limited bilingualism of the non-Cypriot parents as reported in the Parents' Charts (See below Section 6.1.1.2).

In speaking to or being spoken to by siblings, the majority of the children reported that they used more Greek than English (See Figure 6.1.2). Only one child reported that he/she used English ‘Almost always’ in communicating with a sister. The Charts presented an image of children who were using a significant amount of Greek in their everyday lives while there was increased use of English particularly to communicate with siblings and mothers or fathers who were non-Cypriot. Additionally, there was a clear picture of language use at school being primarily Greek.

Children’s Language Charts: language use with family members



Whereas in the school context the children had reported that they were primarily using Greek in their interactions, outside of school in a recreational context a different picture of language use emerged (See Figure 6.1.3). Here the children reported that there was much more use of English in their routines principally in areas where there was not direct interaction with others – for example in using the internet, watching TV or DVDs

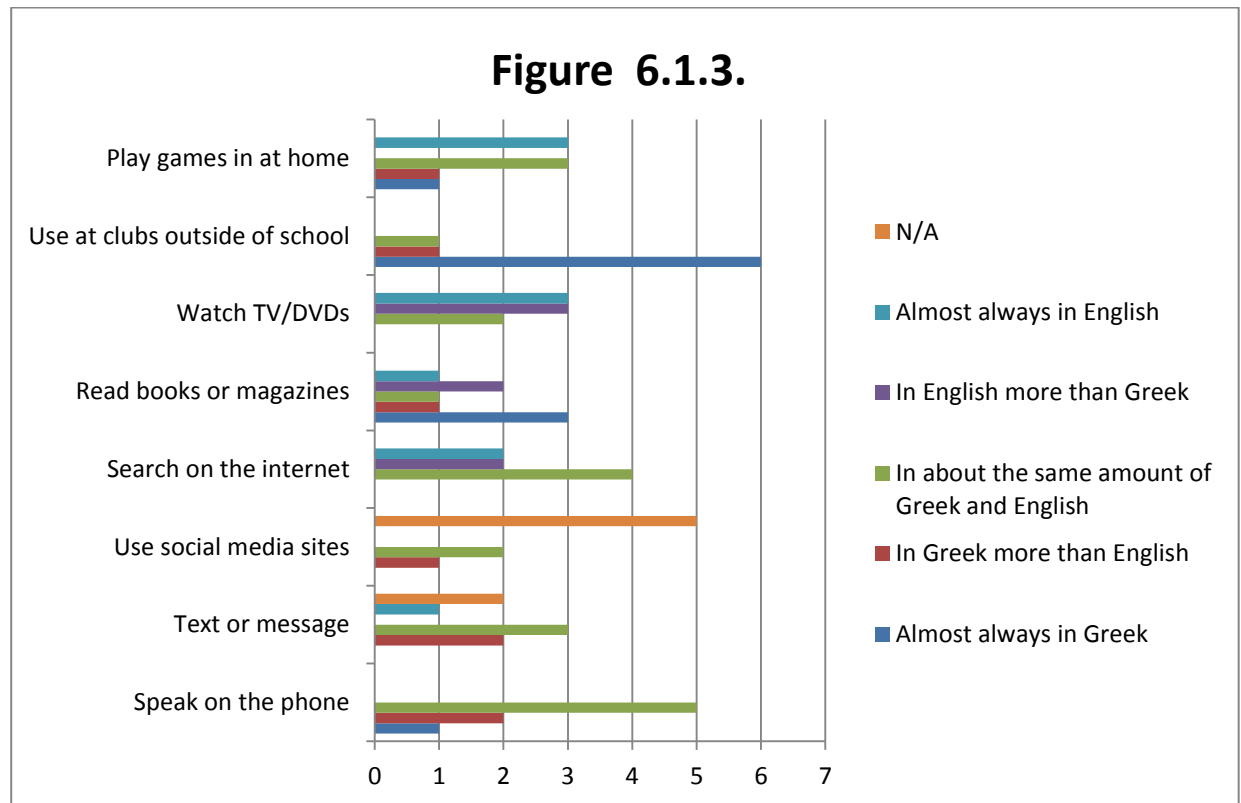
or films at the cinema. In these areas the children reported that they used English either exclusively or at least as frequently as they used Greek. The charts showed that in using the internet or computer, four children reported using 'About the same amount of Greek as English', and two each reported 'More English than Greek' or 'Almost always in English'. Similarly in watching TV or DVDs there was a split from 'About the same amount of Greek and English' through to 'Almost always in English'.

An area where there was more of a division of language use was in the area of literacy, reading books, magazines or newspapers; here three children reported reading 'Almost always in Greek', one each for 'Greek more than English' and 'About the same', two in 'English more than Greek' and one 'Almost always in English'. This divide may reflect literacy skills as although all the children have strong oral competency in English, some have more limited literacy skills. A factor in these literacy skills will be whether the child attended private afternoon English classes, a common phenomenon in Cyprus, where reading and writing skills would become more developed. An added influence on literacy skills may also have been what was available for them to read, particularly as non-Greek speaking mothers may have chosen to buy English language books over Greek ones. Additionally there is a plethora of magazines, websites, and books directed at the English-speaking child which is certainly not mirrored in Greek.

Finally, the areas outside school where the children reported relying more on Greek than on English were all areas involving inter-personal communication. For example, the children reported that when they spoke on the phone, or used language at clubs, such as swimming or football clubs, they often used Greek more than English. This reflects the linguistic profile of Cyprus where, as established earlier, although there is widespread use of English, Greek is the dominant language. Thus the data from the Charts confirm the bilingual standing of the children who use varying degrees of Greek and English every day. Furthermore the data from the charts provides a clear

representation of how these children use their languages in a fluid and shifting manner which is highly context and domain specific.

### Children's Use of English Outside of School

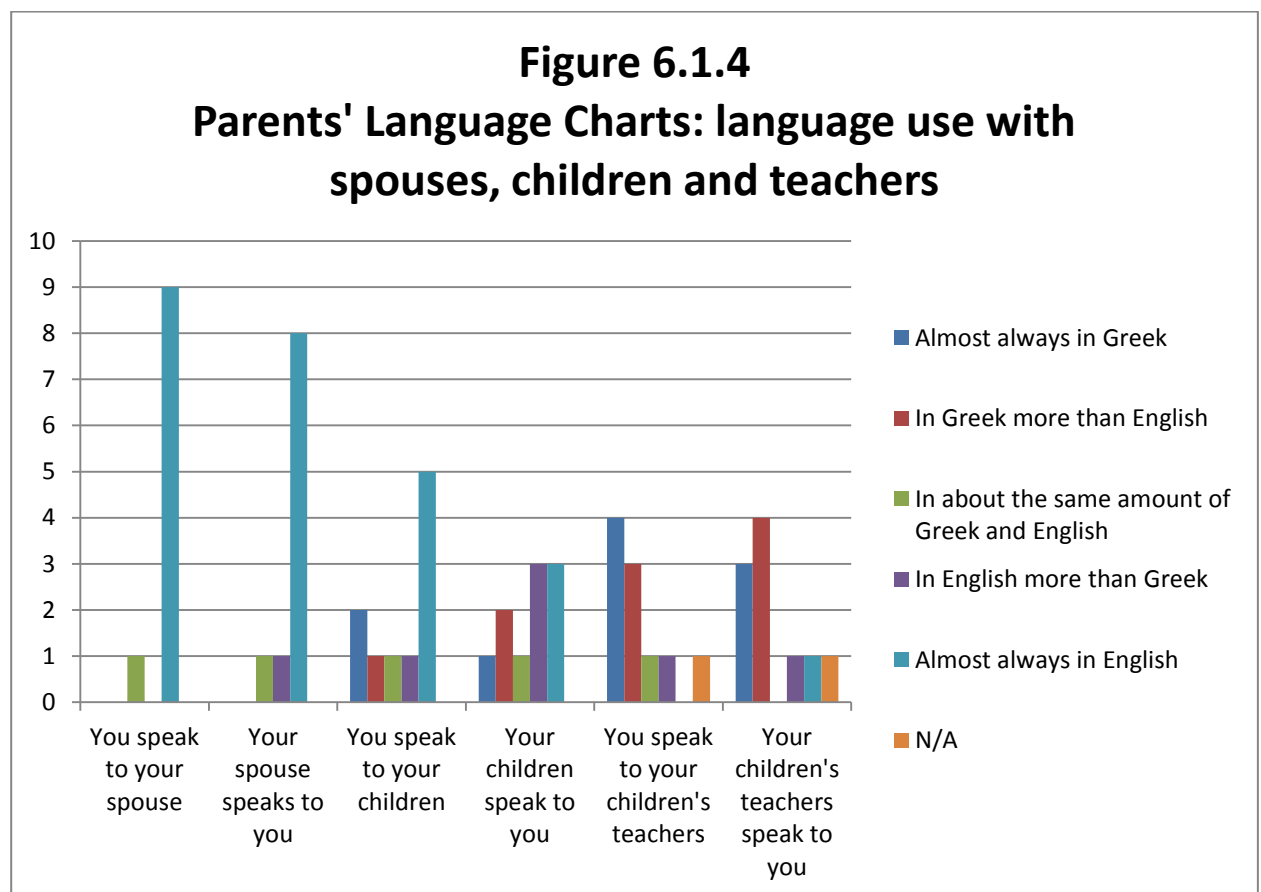


#### 6.1.1.2 Data from Parental Language Use Charts

In addition to the children's charts parents also completed Charts. In total ten Charts were collected from parents: seven by mothers and three by fathers (taking into account one mother had two children in the study). Of those who completed charts two fathers were Cypriot, one non-Cypriot, and two mothers were Cypriot and five were non-Cypriot. The data showed that the parents generally spoke English between them with nine parents indicating they spoke to their spouse 'Almost always in English' and one non-Cypriot mother in 'About the same English and Greek'. This included the four

Cypriot parents who spoke to their spouses ‘Almost always in English’. The language divide may not only indicate fluency levels of the non-Cypriot parents but may also reflect the language the couple were using when they met, as most couples met in the home country of the non-Cypriot spouse and because of this are likely to have developed their relationships in English. The numbers for ‘Your spouse speaks to you’ shifted only by one parent, with eight reporting ‘Almost always in English’, one in ‘English more than Greek’, and one ‘About the same Greek and English’ (See Figure 6.1.4).

Parents' Language Charts: language use with spouses, children and teachers

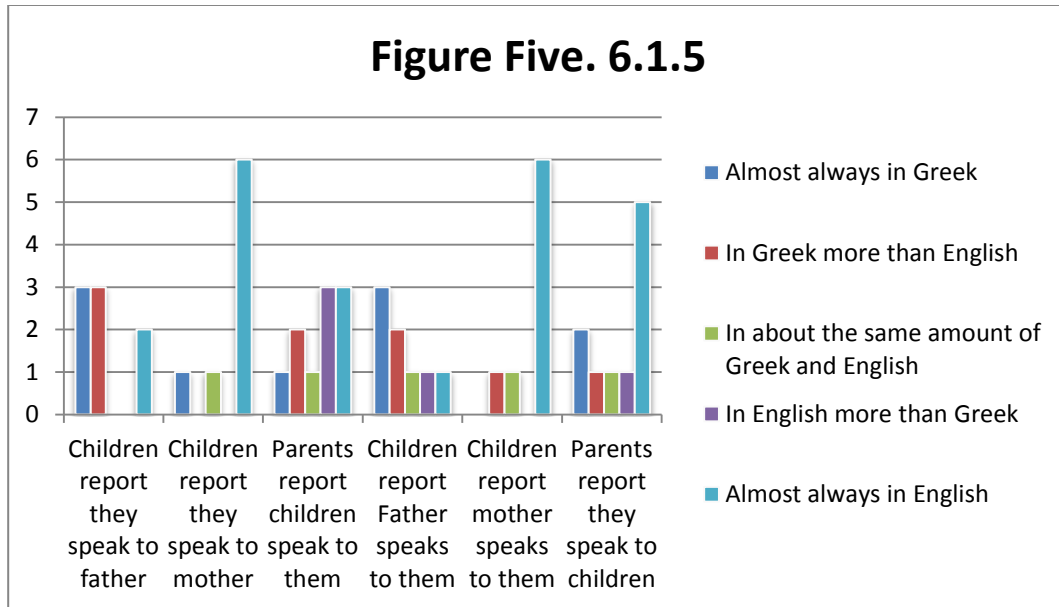


In speaking to children there was much more diversity of language use. Here two parents (one mother and one father, both Cypriot) spoke almost 'Always in Greek'; one Cypriot father in 'More Greek than English', one Cypriot mother in 'About the same Greek and English', one non-Cypriot mother in 'English more than Greek', and five non-Cypriot mothers 'Almost always in English'. This finding indicates the parents generally divided the language they spoke to their children based on their respective languages, so there appeared to be a one-parent one-language approach to language use with the children (Taeschner 2007; Leopold, 1970). However this division is not mirrored in the language the parents reported their children spoke to them. Three non-Cypriot parents each reported the children spoke 'Almost always English' and 'More English than Greek', one Cypriot mother in 'About the same', two Cypriot parents in 'Greek more than English' and one 'Almost always in Greek'. If we examine what the children reported alongside what their parents reported in terms of language use between them, it appears that mothers tended to be more exclusive in their language use with their children, primarily using their first language to communicate (see Figure 6.1.5). As stated earlier for the non-Cypriot mothers this may reflect their own fluency levels in Greek which, based on the Charts, appeared limited and ultimately played a role in how they manage school work and contact with their children's schools.

The Charts were designed with the intention of confirming the dual language use of the children in the study as this was a primary parameter in the selection of the participants; additionally they provided a starting point for a discussion on language in the interviews. There were not designed with the intention of cross analysis with the interview data and had many limitations as discussed in the next section.



## Comparison of Language Use between Parents and Children



### 6.1.2 Limitations of Language Chart Data

Data from the Charts were crucial in establishing a preliminary picture of the children's domains of language use and in confirming that they were indeed bilingual speakers. However, the data presented several limitations. First, the presentation of the Chart itself requires one to make a choice in terms of language use in a given situation, and as a result divisions of use displayed may be influenced by the format of the Charts as you are 'required' to select a category to represent your language use, an issue because choices made may not reflect real language use. This is because the Charts are based on self-reporting within fixed categories and given what we understand about bilingualism, fluidity and language use, it is reasonable to expect that there would be considerable variability and shifting in language use for bilinguals, which the Charts cannot and do not account for. Finally, data from the Charts can lead to unfounded assumptions about the children's fluency levels. For example, if a child indicates she only uses English in

communicating with her mother and a few friends, there may be an assumption that her English ability is quite limited leading one to conclude Greek is the more dominant language. However, assumptions about fluency levels cannot be ascertained simply by mapping the ‘when’, ‘where’ and ‘with whom’ alone (See Section 6.1.2). As a result, the additional classification of ‘how often’ was added to the Charts, allowing for a more complex picture of language use. Nonetheless data generated is still limited and it is important not to misinterpret the picture of language use created. Take for instance the scenario presented above where a child has indicated that she speaks English with her mother whom she sees every day, along with a few friends whom she sees occasionally. Though this data is made more insightful than it would be had frequency of use not been a category, it is not enough to extrapolate how much English she is using or to understand fluency levels. This is because there are a series of outstanding questions which would need answering in order to do this, for example, does she talk to these people a lot, or do they spend most of their time in silence? Do they explore and develop language skills by reading together, doing English worksheets, playing games in English, watching TV shows and discussing them? In order to construct a complete picture of language use, these types of questions would need answering and as a result, perhaps the only way to truly achieve an accurate examination of language use would be to record natural speech patterns for a prolonged period of time. This, however, was something which was neither possible nor purposeful for this study as the intention of the Charts was to confirm the bilingualism of the children, create an overall profile of their language use both in and out of school and to provide enough background information so that it could be used as a starting point for the interview process.

### 6.1.3 Conclusion to Language Use Charts

While acknowledging the limitations of the Charts, the data collected were significant for the purposes of the study in that they confirmed the daily use of both languages by this group of children and their parents, and indicated they are experiencing a bilingual upbringing while attending monolingual school. Finally, the data gathered from the Charts confirmed language used at school as almost exclusively Greek, whereas language with the non-Cypriot parent and in connection to media was predominately English.

## 6.2 Interview Data

Multiple, in-depth interviews were conducted with all participants with the fundamental purpose to explore the main research question of ‘what Greek/English bilingual children report about their experiences of language and identity in the state primary education system in the Republic of Cyprus’. In my effort to explore this main research question, the sub-questions related to the children’s experiences of language and identity within the school setting were also addressed. As my study is small scale generative and qualitative in nature, I was not interested in quantifying the data and as such Silverman’s concept of analysis was used as the overarching approach to the analysis (1995, pp163 – 164). Consequently, interview data was collapsed into themes collected as instances relevant to answering the research questions. The process followed a general funnelling approach which stemmed from the interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 2005), so that themes developed from one set of interviews where followed up in the subsequent interview and so on. Themes were identified in several ways: through commonality of experience, described by Cohen *et al.*, as “the relative frequency and importance of certain topics” (2007, p 476); by a perceived relevance to the research question or by their anomalous appearance. The latter were explored in recognition of

the importance of the individual child's experience and active engagement with society and the school, given postmodern conceptualizations and understandings of children's agency (Walters, 2007).

Due to the funnelling approach of the interview process, and the fact that there were multiple interviews with the same participants coding began as part of the interview process. Therefore once an interview had been conducted, it was transcribed in full and reviewed to explore themes before the next interview was conducted. This meant that a line of questioning raised in the interview of one child could then be followed up with other children as well, such as was the case with teasing at school. It also meant that there was some respondent validation within the interview process, as themes were revisited in subsequent interviews.

Once all interviews had been conducted, each set of interviews was then broken down into charts based on the three categories of language, identity and school experience. Relevant excerpts related to these themes were then placed within each chart and noted so as to explore sub themes. This was again done by group so all first interviews were coded before the second and so on, facilitating the development of the collective case (See Section 5.1 for a discussion of case). The data presented here expand on the most recurrent themes across the interviews while also including reference to anomaly. The relevance of experiences not necessarily common to all participants is important particularly because of the small scale nature of the case. Including such instances allows for all relevant experiences of the children to have equal value, especially imperative because the study is not intended for generalization but rather to uncover and provide initial insight into the experiences of this group of children. Data are presented as excerpts from the interviews using the actual words of the participant, including any pertinent pauses or stresses. All the children were assigned pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. Ultimately, the interview data were the primary focus of the study and as such were given more weight than the Language Use Charts or the Artefacts.

All child interviews were transcribed in full and coded before any data from the parental interviews were reviewed. Within the transcripts utterances which were repeated by several children or emphasized by a participant are presented in bold text. Additionally, parental interviews were not all fully transcribed but were reviewed and studied with only relevant sections transcribed in entirety (Appendix 7, For Parental Interview Data Summary). This was critical because even though parental data are pertinent and interesting and certainly add to the trustworthiness of the study, the study's focus had to remain on the children. By not fully transcribing the parental interviews, direct comparison of the parental interview data with the children's interview data was minimized. Minimizing the influence of parental data was essential because the decision to interview the parents was not made so as to check the reliability of what had been said by the children, as it was not the intention to create a situation of 'verification' where words from the parents were used to cross check the reliability of the children. Rather this decision was an attempt to create a greater picture of the experiences of the children and increase the depth of the developing case.

### 6.2.1 Themes stemming from the interview data

The following themes and sub-themes developed from the interview data with both the children and parents.

The first area addressed their bilingualism and the school, here the data revealed the following sub-themes.

- Managing Language at School:
  - No formal acknowledgement of their bilingualism at school
  - Keep languages separate at school: separating domains of language use
  - Use English only in sanctioned domains
  - Rely on others for help with Greek at school.
  - Need help with Greek
    - Parents report children need help with Greek
  - English is used for performance or display purposes at school

- Use English in an informal role at School
- Issues of power over their use of English at school.

In the area of school experience and identity the following themes emerged.

- Identity and School Experience:
  - Incidents of Teasing - difference used against them
  - Recognition of physical differences
  - Negotiate their identities at school
  - Shifting of their identities at school - inside, outside and on the side
  - Statuses
  - Essentializing of their difference by school

### 6.3 The Interview Data

Before any discussion of the themes from the interview data, it is important to acknowledge that despite some of the children and their families' negative experiences at school; they also reported they were fundamentally happy there. The parents reported that placing their children in state elementary school, as opposed to one of the many private English medium schools in Cyprus, was a deliberate choice. A decision which, despite the challenges as reported below, they concluded they would make again and would encourage other families to make. This commitment to state education is noteworthy as the parents and children were at times critical regarding the school system. However their willingness to repeat the process and to encourage others to do the same is an indication that this criticism does not stem from some unvoiced negativity or malicious intent towards the system.

#### 6.3.1 Managing their Bilingualism at School

A fundamental area the study sought to explore was what the children reported about how they managed their bilingualism at school. These children experience a bilingual

upbringing and as such would be classified as simultaneous bilinguals (See Section 3.3.4.1). Consequently, as noted there is the common assumption that they are balanced in their language abilities. Although our newer understandings of bilingualism, as discussed in Section 3.3, demonstrate that language abilities are not absolute, but rather exist on a continuum which is shifting and context specific, more colloquial perceptions of bilingualism and bilinguals as balanced are still common. Given the children's upbringing and these common assumptions about bilinguals, exploring how the children experienced their bilingualism at school, whether they needed additional linguistic support (Walter, 2010; Meisel, 2004; Cummins, 2000b), whether they used both languages within the school environment and what they reported about how they managed language at school were primary objectives of the study. In an effort to explore these areas, I asked the children and parents about language use at school. I began by inquiring about their being identified as bilingual speakers within the school and whether individual classroom teachers or the school knew they were bilingual. I followed up this questioning with a discussion on how they coped with their languages at school and finally, whether or not they were ever offered additional linguistic support or felt they needed additional support because of their bilingualism. The data on this line of questioning is explored in the following section.

#### 6.3.1.1. Report no formal acknowledgement of their bilingualism at school

As there is no formal mechanism for recognition of this group of children by either the MoEC (MoEC collects statistics on non-Greek speakers but it is not clear if this group is counted), I enquired from the children whether or not they believed their teachers knew they were bilingual. Children reported that individual teachers knew they were bilinguals as characterized in the exchange below with Panos, a sixth grade boy, aged eleven at the time. Panos has a Greek Cypriot father and non-Cypriot mother. His

parents reported they had provided him with extra help with the Greek language outside of school through a private teacher.

K: Um, do your teachers know you speak Greek and English?

P: Yeah.

K: Yeah, all your teachers that you've had?

P: Yeah.

K: Yeah do you ever use English in class? Ever?

P: No.

Parental interviews also acknowledged that the school and teachers knew of the children's bilingualism. However this knowledge was characterized as casual and neither the children nor the parents reported any formal recognition of their bilingualism at school. Parents reported no discussions with teachers or the school about their children's bilingualism or any possible influence it might have on managing classwork, homework or cultural concerns. The only exception to this was a case where a child had experienced learning difficulties at school and the parents reported that in meetings with the child's teachers and the MoEC representatives, they felt the child's bilingualism was identified as the culprit for what the parents viewed as general learning issues (See Appendix 7).

Ultimately, the children and families reported that although individual teachers and their local school administration often knew the children were bilingual, this knowledge appeared casual and there was never any formal recognition. Why the families and the children reported no formal recognition of the children's bilingualism is interesting as previous studies of Cypriot teachers' attitudes towards immigrant children and their families cite teachers' perceptions of a lack of the parents' integration and interest in school as a reason for poor pupil progress and communication (Theodorou, 2010). However, these families reported high levels of integration and contact with the schools.



In fact of the seven families, six were currently or had previously been actively involved in the Parent Teachers' Associations of their respective schools. Included in the group of parents were three presidents or ex-presidents of the PTA, one long-term treasurer and two committee members. Consequently the families did not present as either uninvolved or disenfranchised from the school community and certainly would have been available for discussions about their children's bilingualism.

#### 6.3.1.2 Report keeping languages separate at school: separating domains of language use

When asked about how they managed their languages at school, the children reported a separation of the two languages within the formal school context. This is illustrated in the interview with Panos, when he explained what he understood about the 'rule' of using language at school.

K: What are your languages? If somebody said what languages are yours?

P: I would say English and Greek.

K: OK, both of the languages you consider to be your languages?

P: Ya.

K: And you use both of the languages every day?

P: Ya.

K: And do you think you use them equally?

P: Ya.

K: Ya, when do you use Greek and when do you use English?

P: When I go to school I use Greek, and when I come home when I talk to my mom I speak English.

Panos' comments reflect the picture created by the information garnered from both the Children's and Parents' Charts, which showed distinct language domains between

school and home (Section 6.1.1.2). The separation into these linguistic domains is not an unusual finding as the children were enrolled in a monolingual school system where the language of instruction is Greek. Of interest is what the children reported about *how* they used and understood language use at school.

Language use at school is characterized in the exchange below; Christos was in the fifth grade at the time of the interview and was ten years old, with a Greek Cypriot father and non-Cypriot mother. His mother reported that he received considerable academic support from both his father, who was highly involved in the school and homework, and his Cypriot grandparents who oversaw homework on a daily basis. I asked him about incidents at school where he might remember information in English not Greek, so I specifically referenced other classes – not English class, where we had already established he spoke English.

- K: Ah, what about when you're at school and you're like doing lessons like maybe you're doing επιστήμη (Science) or ιστορία (History) γεωγραφία (Geography) one of these lessons like this? Do you ever have a time where sometimes, you know, you are going to answer, like the teacher asked a question, do you ever have a time where you get the answer in English instead of in Greek?
- C: NO. (Emphatic here with his answer)
- K: No?
- C: I only speak in Greek and answer. Only in English class, I speak and answer in English.
- K: Have you ever had a time where you answered the teacher's question and the words came out in English?
- C: No.
- K: No, have you ever had a time where you knew the answer, but you knew it in English, and you put your hand up or you had to wait before you

could answer [Yeah] so that you could change it from English into Greek?

C: Yeah.

K: You've had a time, can you tell me about that time?

C: Uh, like my teacher asked me something and I, cause my mom speaks to me here in English, I thought about it, and cause my mom had told me that before and I thought about it but then I answered in Greek.

K: So what happens to you when you're at school and you know the answer in English let's say you know, but not in Greek, what happens, what do you do?

C: I still think of it in English, but I just say it in Greek, I don't have no problem [my emphasis here].

Revealing in this exchange with Christos was not his admission of moving from one language to the other; but rather, how emphatic he was about not ever making the mistake of using English in what he presumably understood as an inappropriate domain. When I initially began questioning him about his language use he was adamant that he never used English outside of English class, he always answered in Greek. His insistence on this is as if an admission of mixing the languages would be equated with weakness, or perhaps an indication that he could not 'manage' his bilingualism properly indicating possibly that he was less than an "idealized native speaker" (Leung et al, 1997).

Furthermore during the interview Christos stated that he was in possession of information that he knew in English and which he had accessed in English, but he did not use English in his answer, waiting until he had figured out how to say it all in Greek. Naturally, as the language of instruction is Greek it would be expected answer in Greek and as a bilingual he will be aware of domain specific use of language (Grosjean, 2001, 1994 and 1982). However his last sentence; "I don't have no problem" is of interest. It is possible that he uses the phrase to indicate that the movement between and

through languages as needed is not difficult for him, he manages without any problems. Or perhaps his response reflected the idea that he acquainted an inability to manage his languages, by ensuring that he did not translanguage or mix within the school setting, as ‘a problem’ or ‘a weakness’. It is curious that rather than explaining himself by saying for example, ‘I do it all the time’ or ‘It is easy for me’ or even ‘It is not hard’ he referred to it as not being a problem, indicating a negativity connected to not being able to keep languages separate. This is particularly revealing in terms of how we understand languages at school particularly as we have seen in Section 3.3 that bilinguals are not two people in one and although language use is often domain specific, incidents of translanguageing and moving through and between languages are likely parts of his linguistic rapport. It is revealing that he does not acknowledge the movement and fluidity in his language use in a more confident uncomplicated manner, but chooses to downplay and dismiss it.

The importance connected to keeping languages separate at school was also revealed in my interview with Stella, where she refers to her ability to maintain control over the correct code also as not being ‘a problem’ as seen in the following exchange. Stella was eleven at the time and in the sixth grade. She has a Greek Cypriot father and a non-Cypriot mother and has attended the neighbourhood school all her life.

K: It’s the same, yeah and in terms of classes and using English and using Greek how do you find that? I mean have you needed help at school, like with your Greek or anything like that, or do you manage on your own, or . . . ?

S: Um, I never need help like I’m fine, English and Greek, and um that’s all like it’s easy for me to know Greek and English, cause when I grow up I want to be an actor and it’s going to be easy, like I want to start to use to use fame.

K: OK and what about like, like you know does it make school for you? Does it play any part?

- [Someone enters flat]
- K: In school for you, does it; is it important or not important?
- S: Um, it's uh, very important for me to know the two languages, but like it's easy. **I don't have any problem** [my emphasis].
- K: OK and is it like important at school, or not so important at school, or is it just important to you or . . .?
- S: Important to me.
- K: OK, at school is it important?
- S: No, not really.
- K: OK, why not?
- S: Because we don't usually speak English and, um, it is easy for me and that's all.

Stella is clear that there are advantages to knowing two languages; in fact, she has even connected her bilingualism to her future success - to become a world famous actress. However her insistence that she clearly and without problem manages the two languages is curious. Like Christos, it is again as if an acknowledgement of any struggle could somehow be equated with a weakness.

Given both of these responses we could conjecture that this emphatic denial of ever mixing languages may also have to do with status of language use at school, an interpretation that those bilinguals who manage their languages without interference are performing and using language in an 'acceptable manner', while those who demonstrate a struggle to keep the languages separate or who demonstrate mixing and translanguage are perceived as 'problematic'. This may be influenced by the fact that the school system, through its mainstreaming policy with bilingual students, only acknowledges one type of bilingual child: the immigrant child, a child who within the Cypriot context is stereotyped with limited social acceptance and mobility. Subsequently as immigrants

or foreigners are negatively stigmatized in Cyprus (Trimikliniotis, 2004) and the school system only recognizes bilingual students as synonymous with second language learner, foreigner and migrant, this group of children may feel pressured to emphasize not having any problems with language at school as a means of avoiding the negative undertones of being associated with this marginalized group. This is certainly not improbable given the local context, and as we shall see later, there is clear evidence that the children explicitly understand the negative connotations connected to being both bilingual (άλλογλώσσα for the MoEC) and foreign (ξένος) in local schools.

#### 6.3.1.3 Report Using English only within Sanctioned Domains

Beyond controlling any unwanted influence of English during regular classroom lessons, the children presented a clear understanding of areas where English is sanctioned and allowed to play a limited role at school. Below Christos describes his use of English during English language lessons, here Christos echoes the same idea he had expressed earlier of not having a problem.

K: How does it help you with both languages at school?

C: So at my in English class some of the kids don't really know English, they just say some words, and I can say like a whole sentence or a story in English.

K: Does it help you in any other way outside of English class that you know two languages?

C: Ah, not really.

K: Not really, so do you think that knowing English and Greek helps you in any way at school?

C: No, I mean not that much.

- K: Not that much. So do you think that it makes, that knowing Greek and English makes school more difficult for you?
- C: No, it's the same.
- K: It's the same?
- C: Yeah, **I have no problem** [my emphasis].
- K: How is it the same?
- C: Cause like I just know the English for home, and for friends that can talk to English and at school I speak Greek.

Christos was firm in the protocol for using English here; English was only for during the lesson. Later, I asked him if English had any other role or job at school, and he declared that it did not, following this up again by explaining that the languages were kept separate and reiterating that he did not have a problem with this. As Christos reports it his languages are separate, and in fact in his last sentence he even places his English abilities beyond the school context. English is for home, and with those friends who speak English; it has no place within the school context beyond that of the English class. In fact, he separates the languages to such an extent that he does not connect limiting English use to English class as a lost opportunity to share information which could be valuable and enriching, as he had described in the previous extract. His rationale for this is that the languages are separate at school and the only role for English is when it is used in English language class.

As established in Section 3.3 and 3.4 bilinguals are not two people in one and neither are their languages kept independent from each other; therefore, this is another example of a contradiction as it is expected that there will be shifting and moving between languages which may result in codeswitching, interlanguage or translanguage all of which one would expect teachers at the very least to be aware of as part of the children's linguistic makeup. On the contrary, the children report visibly separate uses of language where employing English 'outside of the English classroom' is presented as unacceptable.

The following is another example of this separation as explained by Demetra who was eleven and in the sixth grade at the time, she has a Greek Cypriot mother and a non-Cypriot father. Her mother reported that she managed well at school. Here she recalls what happened when she remembered information in English during another lesson.

- K: Do you ever use English at school?
- D: Only in the English lesson.
- K: Ya, when you are doing other lessons like let's say Greek and you are doing vocabulary you know (I switch to Greek here), κάνετε λεξιλόγιο (you do vocabulary) Do you ever have a time where you say the word in English, or the word comes first in English?
- D: Yes, sometimes like some letters I write in English.
- K: Oh, OK and when that happens what does your teacher say to you?
- D: She just fixes it.
- K: She just fixes it OK, um, have you ever had a time where you said the word in English in class.
- D: (Giggling) Yes.
- K: Yes – how did that make you feel?
- D: Well, (pause) well I was a bit annoyed cause I couldn't remember the name the word in Greek.
- K: What class was that in?
- D: Fourth grade.
- K: Fourth grade and were you doing γλώσσα (language) and what happened? Tell me about what happened.
- D: Oh, we were, ah, the teacher asked us a question and I knew the word only in English and nobody like knew what the answer was.
- K: And you were like stuck there going, I know the word, I know the word.
- D: Yes.
- K: Did you tell her the word in English?
- D: No.



K: No why not?  
D: I don't know.  
K: Did you think to tell her the word?  
D: No.  
K: You didn't think to tell her the word in English?  
D: No.  
K: OK. What did you think would happen if you said the word in English?  
Did you think that . . . ?  
D: I don't know  
K: You don't know. Did you think that you would maybe get it right or get it wrong or that maybe she wouldn't understand?  
D: Well, she would understand cause she knew English  
K: Oh.  
D: Uh, maybe she would be angry, I don't know.  
K: OK, so you weren't sure, confident let's say [Yeah] to say the word at that time.

An interesting aspect of Demetra's example is she knew the teacher spoke English and would have understood her, yet she was not confident that answering or using English in class would be acceptable even in a setting where by her account the class was stuck. Perhaps more troubling is her concern that breaching the unspoken rule about not using English could have made the teacher angry and by inference gotten her into trouble. Finally she describes being annoyed with herself for not recalling the word immediately; indicating that she at least internally appears to hold herself to a standard where she feels she should not have to struggle to find a word, perhaps confirming her idea of an uncomplicated use of languages for the bilingual speaker.

Stella also reported the unspoken rules of language use at school in the following excerpt where she expresses how English is used at school.

K: OK do you think that like if you had a time and you were studying γεωγραφία (geography) or something like that and you wanted to use like a word in English that you'd be able to?

S: Uh, uh.

K: Why not?

S: Ohm, [pause] ah cause like the teachers, we don't speak any English at school, we speak in Greek **during Greek lessons we have to speak Greek [her emphasis]**.

Though Stella does not recount being specifically instructed 'not to use English', like several of the other children, she is clear on the inappropriateness of its use beyond the English language class. She states, "During Greek lessons we have to speak Greek". On the surface this is reasonable enough; she is after all enrolled in a monolingual school setting and therefore is expected to communicate in Greek. However, the concern here is less about 'when' a specific language can and cannot be used and more about 'what' she understands about the position of her other language at school. Undoubtedly it would be unrealistic to assume that the classroom teacher should allow students to use their other languages to communicate with her during a Greek language lesson, particularly as based on the growing multiculturalism of Cyprus, teachers would have to be multilingual to manage. Nevertheless, this incident confirms the ideas expressed earlier in the example given by Panos, in which there appears to be an underlying tone of negativity towards any mixing or influence of the one language on the other. The children seem to carry a sentiment that their languages should not interact with each other within the classroom environment, reflective of the expectation of a system perceiving bilingual language use as two languages held separately much like previous understandings of bilinguals as two separate people in one. This is evident particularly as these incidents do not constitute cases where children are gently

encouraged to stick to Greek, or assisted in working through linguistic issues they may encounter. Instead there is an association of deficit with any lack of ability to firmly stick to one code without interference or influence. As a result, displays of their other language are to be avoided unless, as we shall see in Section 6.3.1.5, they take place within the sanctioned realm of the school and teacher. If not they appear to be interpreted as a weakness and the speakers stigmatized for using their other language in an inappropriate domain. This situation may be influenced by two factors: first the long running debate between the role of GCD and SMG in Cypriot schools, which until recently has encouraged teachers to approach language with a focus on the importance of the use of the correct code - STD, and secondly, the fact that the majority of classroom teachers have received no formal training in teaching bilingual pupils both of which are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

#### 6.3.1.4 Report Relying on Others for Help with Greek at School

Naturally, not all the children experienced their bilingualism in the school context in the same way, and some shared a different picture of how they used and managed language at school. Panos described how he used a variety of tactics to manage his languages, including relying on friends.

K: Do you ever find yourself like when you're in class do you ever have times where you have trouble thinking in Greek?

P: Ya.

K: Ya, what's that like? What happens when you have . . .?

P: Sometimes I can't think of a word in Greek and I think of it in English [Uh huh] and sometimes the other way round.

K: OK and when that happens to you at school and you think of the word in English what do you do?

P: I, I think and then if I don't know sometimes if my friends know I ask them.

K: You ask your friends what's this word?

P: Ya.

K: Ya and will they, do they know enough English that they can help you?

P: Sometimes, yes.

K: Do you ever ask the teacher? Do you ever say to the teacher, Kyria (Mrs.) I can't think of the word in. . . .

P: Hardly.

Here Panos reports on how he uses a variety of tactics including relying on friends as he moves into and out of his languages in a translanguaging moment. Of interest is the acknowledgement that he does not actively rely on his teacher to help him in times like this, much like Stella, Demetra and Christos.

A further experience of language struggles at school is recounted by Maria, who unlike the other children, explained she did not feel that she had 'no problem' with Greek. Additionally and perhaps as a consequence of her acknowledgement of this, she did not experience her Greek at school in an uncomplicated manner. She was the only child who actively recalled relying on her teacher to help her when things were difficult.

K: OK ah let me just think, what happens at school let's say you're doing like ιστορία (history) or επιστήμη (science) you know one of those classes, ah, and have you ever had a time where the teacher asked a question and you knew the answer but it came first in English? Do you ever have times where you're like trying to get the words?

M: Yeah, kind of, yeah.

K: What do you do when you have times like that?

M: Well, I try to use help from the kids that know English too and sometimes it's kind of I don't really get it right, but my teacher understands it, but mostly I

think I know the words but some of them cause they are kind of hard and I can't pronounce them right, I just use my mind.

The difference in how Maria described a similar situation to those of Christos, Stella, and Demetra is her acknowledgment of struggle and of translanguaging and moving between languages; additionally, her awareness of her teacher's understanding, a facet of language use not expressed by the other children. She reported working to use all of the resources available to her to in such situations – relying on friends and the teacher understanding a response which may be less than perfect. For Maria things were not straightforward and she did not infer that she had “no problem”; she recognized that sometimes it was “hard” and she had to “use her mind”. This admission presents a situation more in line with what the literature on bilingualism would convey as a more realistic picture of bilingual language use where language use takes place in a complicated and varied manner influenced by place and incident.

#### 6.3.1.5 Report Needing Help with Greek

The idea of managing languages as being “hard” was an issue which arose with more ease among the children when we discussed using language beyond the classroom, for school work such as completing homework. An example of this was described by Andry who was in the sixth grade and eleven years old at the time; she has an English-speaking father and a Greek-speaking mother. I asked her about managing school work and if she thought being bilingual influenced this in any way.

K: And have you had any like do you feel that you have had any like trouble with homework and school because [Sometimes] you speak English and Greek?

A: Sometimes, I have like difficulties with like Math, Greek and I ask my mom and sometimes she tells me like no, do it by yourself and then sometimes she explains it to me.

K: OK have you ever had a teacher who has, like asked you, like if you needed like any extra help because you speak English and Greek?

A: No.

K: No, have you ever felt that you needed at teacher to ask you? That you needed help?

A: No.

During the conversation Andry acknowledged she sometimes had difficulties and had to rely on help from her mother (a native Greek speaker). However, she stated she had never been offered help by a teacher and continued by affirming that she did not feel she needed help. The declaration that she did not need help from her teacher is interesting because it directly contradicts what she had said previously that sometimes she struggled with Math and Greek and got help from her mother. The separation between needing help from parents with homework and needing help from a teacher may connect again to ideas of fluency and the idealized native speaker as discussed earlier, where the negative stereotyping of non-native speakers and foreigners within the school and society at large influences how the children acknowledge their bilingualism within the classroom.

Additionally there appears to be an issue with expressing a need for help with teachers which reveals vulnerability. The conversations with the children regarding language at school showed how little they directly relied on their teachers for academic support connected to linguistic matters. This may have been influenced by issues of exposure to teachers' evaluation and power on two levels. The first is to acknowledge that you have not understood something, or you need help academically and the second, that there may be a linguistic component to your lack of understanding. Both possibilities are

unsettling in what they reveal about the children's confidence in exposure with their teachers in Cyprus.

#### 6.3.1.5.1 Parents Report Children Need Help with Greek

Of interest to our discussion on language at school is that during the parental interviews when fluency issues in Greek were discussed, four of the seven parents interviewed expressed that they currently or had previously felt that their child could have benefited from additional academic support with the Greek language. Additionally perhaps due to both the socioeconomic position of the families as middle class and the frequent inability of the foreign parent to help significantly with homework completion (discussed later) families often turned to outside help by paying for private teachers, the parents of three of these children had provided additional support to their children through private tutors outside of school. One child had had four years of four afternoons a week, with a private tutor to complete homework and improve language skills. Interestingly though academic achievement in Greek was a concern of parents, they also acknowledged that they had not raised this as an concern with teachers or the school. This may be because although they expressed that they thought the children should be doing better, none of the children were failing, or had been identified by the school as not managing in Greek. As one father put it;

“I think the school they don't care if a child is a bilingual child, they don't care. They keep seeing all the kids as Greek Cypriots, Greek speaking and they don't treat them differently. I mean this is what I see. But what I notice with both my children, both my children have problems with Greek language. Um, dictionary? (ορθογραφία? – spelling?) [Literally dictation, a common teaching method in many primary schools] Spelling yeah, and ways to express themselves freely in Greek, they express themselves easy in English, more easy (um hum) um.” (Second interview with Panos' father).

Here he acknowledged that by his own standard, he believed his children had had concerns with their Greek language abilities but he almost resignedly characterized the school as not caring and this was perhaps why help was sought privately outside the school.

Perhaps unsurprisingly the parents who had not felt their children needed additional support included both of the families with Greek-speaking mothers who readily credited their native abilities in Greek with an ability to manage the children's school and home work. Both acknowledged that were they not Greek speakers, they believed their children would have needed additional help especially with homework. The third parent who had felt her children had not needed additional support credited this to the fact that her husband and parents' in-law were heavily involved in providing academic support to her children. This inability of the non-Cypriot parent to manage school and home work was an issue which raised itself repeatedly in the parent interviews. The majority of non-Cypriot mothers reported that they could not manage the linguistic requirements of homework, that no support or acknowledgement of this difficulty was made by schools or individual teachers, and that even though their spouses were involved in providing academic support to the children, they often had more demanding work schedules resulting in the mothers usually ensuring that homework was completed as opposed to correct.

#### 6.3.1.6 Report English used for Performance or Display Purposes at School

The next area discussed with the children was what they reported about the role of English at school. Though there appears to be no official acknowledgement of the children's' bilingualism by the school, the children reported occasions when they were required to use English outside English lessons. One such occasion was reported by



Maria, she recalled a day when the teacher invited her to speak about herself to the rest of the class in English.

K: So can you think of a day where it was sort of not so good to be Greek American?

M: Um, it's when I, it's this day when my teacher wanted me to like tell stuff about me in English, and people they were like proud and they were looking at me and kind of making me a little bit shy, but I liked it.

The event appears to have lacked any clear context, even for Maria, and thus could be characterized as an isolated performance of culture; a well-meaning but perhaps ineffectual attempt to incorporate some sort of recognition of the children's cultural background into the school environment. Ultimately, she recollects that she ended up feeling proud and good about the experience.

Such occasions of using English beyond English class appear to be primarily for performance purposes and are controlled and designed by the teacher and the school often without consultation or involvement of the child. This was certainly the case for Andry, who related being told to sing a song and then feeling embarrassed about it.

K: Only in English lesson. OK and I was wondering have you ever had a time when you've spoken English in a class which is not an English lesson?

A: Yes, in the second grade.

K: Yeah, what happened?

A: The teacher told us to sing a song that we know in English or another language and I sang a song in English.

K: You sang a song in English and how did you feel about that?

A: Embarrassed.

K: Why embarrassed?

- A: I don't know.
- K: Was it the singing that was embarrassed (laughter) or was it the English?
- A: I knew that song that nobody else knew it and they thought that it was a song that I made up or something.
- K: Oh OK, so you were concerned [Yeah] that the kids didn't understand the words, [Yeah].

Andry's sense of embarrassment appears to have had less to do with her not being comfortable using English in front of the other children, and more to do with her perspective that no context for her display was provided by the teacher. Consequently, she recalled feeling as if she were on display for the entertainment of the other children and not liking it. Perhaps if her teacher had created a context for both the song and its meaning, Andry wouldn't have had an issue with presenting the English song for her classmates. Here what is at issue is not what was done, but how it was done.

An even greater *faux pas* related to this type of cultural performance was described by Stella, when she talked about English being used in a play at school. She began by recounting the story of another child who had an English-speaking role in a play and went on to describe the roles given to two of her English-speaking friends at school.

- S: I think, I had the part like, I think but I don't know but a first grader she's (mumbles) her mom's from another country and her dad's from Cyprus, she spoke English and everybody laughed I mean it was a funny you know that she had...
- K: Yeah?
- S: And, um, EOKA?
- K: Ya το πρώτο του Απριλίου [For the first of April?]

S: Yeah, they put George and John who they are from England; they are England people, they talk English.

K: And they made them the part in the play?

S: Yeah.

K: To be the English guys?

S: Yeah.

Mother interrupts her: “His mom said something like why must my child always die during the pageants”

What Stella recounted here is an occasion where the school selected two English speaking – British boys - to participate in a play honouring the national heroes from the independence struggle with the British. Such plays are common annual events in schools in Cyprus and often involve the re-enactment of the arrest and execution of the heroes by British soldiers. In what can only be interpreted as an attempt to add an air of authenticity to the play, the school decided to incorporate the linguistic abilities of these children, so the English-speaking children were assigned the roles of English-speaking colonial oppressors who go about the trial and execution of their classmates. Such incidents are much more about cultural than linguistic insensitivity, particularly as the English dialogue used within such re-enactments would be within the linguistic range of most Cypriot children. (See Appendix 1 for a sample script from one such play).

#### 6.3.1.7 Report an Informal Role for English at School

Although the children assert an understanding of the role and appropriateness of using English at school, English is for English lessons and when the school or teachers sanction it at performances, many of the children reported using English on their own terms at school particularly on the school playground. One example of such an occasion

came from Maria, who spoke about using English at the breaks with other children like her – even from lower classes.

K: OK so those times, alright what about you, do you ever find yourself using English at school in a lesson at school?

M: Yeah in English lessons I do, and I also have friends in my school that they, they're kind of American a little bit and I talk to them in English and my friends I always talk to them in Greek cause they really don't know English.

K: Which are the friends that you speak to in English?

M: Uh, there are two or three boys and one is Paul and Costas and those are the Australian and Chinese, I also have friends from the other classes they might be even smaller than me, like one of them is Georgia and Sally is Mexican and English at the same time and I talk to her in English so like and her sister too [Um hum]

K: And how does that make you feel when you can speak to her in English?

M: Well we understand each other and since she knows English too I don't really bother, it doesn't bother me if she talks Greek cause we both know Greek too, yeah.

Maria reported a subgroup of friends with whom regardless of nationality, ethnicity, linguistic diversity or age she had one thing in common, the ability to communicate in English. She explained that they often sought each other out during the break times. This seeking out of others 'like' them, and creating a space where the children use English on their own terms at school, is echoed by several other children who recounted similar experiences. The following is an excerpt from my conversation with George where I asked him about what he liked best about being able to speak English at Dimottico and he referred to these friendships in the following extract.

- K: Oh OK what's the thing that you like best about being a bilingual kid at Dimottico? If you had to say this is the thing I like best about being bilingual, being δίγλωσσος [bilingual], being able to speak two languages at Dimottico what is the best thing about it?
- G: When I can talk to other people.
- K: OK and who are the people that you are able to talk to at Dimottico? Cause we are talking only at Dimottico when you're at school who are the people that you are able to talk to?
- G: I mean there is one from Bulgaria, and then Zena she's a girl I'm not really sure where she is from.
- K: Do they speak English?
- G: Yeah, they speak.
- K: OK and do you speak to them in English at school? Like at the διάλειμμα (break)?
- G: Yeah, sometimes.

In George's case this connection was beyond shared language as both of the children he spoke about were not Greek/English speakers but knew some English and he used English in speaking with them perhaps as a means of establishing a sense of camaraderie – us the different children, us the English speakers, us the not completely Cypriot children. This sense of establishing a connection and camaraderie with other non-Cypriot children may also stem from the ability of this group of children to express themselves in English on the playground without fear of repercussion or negative judgement from others. This is because the children are very aware of the fact that English is a high status, global language; it is highly valued and taught in the schools – as opposed to for example the Bulgarian spoken by George's friend Zena (perhaps accounting for why they use English to communicate). This awareness of their status as opposed to other non-Cypriot children is not confined to language and is discussed later in Section 6.3.2

#### 6.3.1.8 Report issues of Power over their use of English at school.

Although they are aware of the status of English, it would be inaccurate to assume that the children were in control of the perceptions and behaviours of others in an uncomplicated one-dimensional manner. As such the children report they can be reprimanded by their peers for displays of English language ability deemed unacceptable by their peer group. Maria explained how she experienced this in the following account:

K: What about at school do you think that knowing Greek and English helps you at school? I mean is there. . .

M: Yeah it kind of does.

K: Yeah, how does it help you? Where does it help?

M: Well it helps me sometimes in English lessons cause we have to, and some people have difficulties and I can help them [Um hum] and in Greek OK I don't really, I don't really like if I have something in my mind in English I really don't say it cause I don't want other people to like not understand, I am like the only child and I'm showing off and stuff.

K: Oh, Okay so it would make you feel like you are kind of showing off?

M: Yeah.

K: Do you think the other kids would see that, think that you were kind of showing off if you said something in English?

M: Uh, maybe cause some of them get jealous easily. Well like there was this time that my teacher picked me and the boys that like know English only so we can go say something to this lady that came to see us but the other kids got a little bit jealous but I don't know what to do about that.

K: And what did they do when they got a little bit jealous?

- M: Sometimes they don't really talk and they get a little bit mad and they ignore me and that kind of stuff.
- K: Um hum and you think it was because [Yeah] you got picked to go and talk to this lady [Yeah] and how did that make you feel at that time?
- M: It kind of it's not really fair cause I really want to be friends with all the people I know and if they like ignore me and stuff, I won't have any in the end [Um hum].

By Maria's account there was a correlation between her ability to speak English and negative treatment by her peers when she was singled out. She ended the account by stating that she wanted to be friends with everyone and that the experience made her worry about not having any friends. The incident seems to have sent a message about managing this identity and being careful with how 'special' she allowed herself to be within the school context. She was aware of the advantages of knowing English, yet at the same time she felt the need to be careful. She didn't want to be perceived as "showing off" and as a result she was cautious with how much of her linguistic ability she display - just enough to help out and establish what she knew, but not enough to get her in trouble.

This concern over what others think and how they react to her English abilities is particularly interesting. Maria 'was not trying' to show off here, the reality is she speaks English, something she cannot rid herself of, and very different from a child who might be accused of showing off over an object like a new iPad or some other material possession, for example. Yet Maria is aware that she must manage her English at school: display just enough to help out others and do what the teacher tells her but not enough to draw the disapproval of her classmates. Ultimately, not only is she managing her linguistic abilities, but so are her classmates.

This idea of managing English at school so as not to be accused of showing off was also discussed by George. During our first interview I asked him about what it was like to be a mixed child at school, expecting that this would lead into talk about the school environment and friendships; instead George led into an example of how he had to be careful with language at school.

K: OK, I wanted to ask you a question that is kind of a big question, OK?  
And what I wanted you to think about is if you think about yourself  
you're a kid who is Greek Cypriot and American English speaking, can  
you tell me what do you think it is like to be that kid at school?

G: At school?

K: Yeah.

G: Um, it's strange sometimes [mumbles] they say like at English class I'm  
a 'know it all.'

George's expression of being a bicultural child at school as "strange" is echoed in his sentence completion exercise where he responds to the question "When I think about me and who I am I would say I am?" with the words a "stranger at school" (Appendix 5). His response here appears to add an additional layer to this idea when he referred to being told that he is a "know it all" in English class. He is an English speaking child, in an English lesson at school where he is aware that he must be careful with how much knowledge of English he displays because if he oversteps, he will likely be reprimanded by his classmates and accused of showing off. This appears to be a more difficult task for George than it is for Maria, who talked about the same issue but with the confidence that she could manage it, whereas George appeared to have more of a struggle with how to manage his two languages in the school context. He revisited this complexity during our second interview.

K: No so are you the only kid in your class who speaks English and Greek?

G: I think, yeah.



- K: Yeah, you are. Yeah and how do you feel about that? To be the only kid in the class who speaks English and Greek?
- G: I feel like I'm a stranger or something.
- K: Why do you say you feel like a stranger? What is it that makes you feel like you're a stranger?
- G: Sometimes [mumbles] when I say something in English they start laughing [mumbles] that it is funny to them.
- K: Oh Okay so if you say something, can you give me an example like a story of kind of when that might of happened to you? Like when you said something in English ...
- G: Like just once I said the word American Football instead of football (Cypriot accent used here) and they started laughing cause they thought it was funny.
- K: OK so they thought it was funny that you had said American Football?
- G: Yeah, the way I said it.
- K: Oh how you said it?
- G: Yeah, I guess.
- K: Oh OK and how did that make you feel? At that time.
- G: Ah I felt a bit [pause here] I didn't like. . .

George described being teased about his accent in English, because he did not speak English like his classmates did. A similar incident of this kind of correction was described by Stella, who also talked about being corrected for her non-Cypriot accent in English.

- K: Ya, OK what I wanted you to think about is do your friends know that you speak English and Greek?
- S: Yeah.
- K: Yeah, and what do they say about it?

- S: Well when we do English [um hum] I mean to school, they might like I speak to the teacher in English, and they make fun of me like they correct me like how Cypriot sounds.
- K: The teacher corrects you or your friends correct you?
- S: My friends.
- K: Your friends correct you?
- S: Yeah.
- K: What do they correct you? Give me an example of how they correct you.
- S: Ohm, OK let me think, hum like I say the time like four forty five and they like say like ohm four five minutes past and they correct me. OK, but the teacher says like that I am right.
- K: OK and how do you feel when they correct you like that?
- S: Not good.
- K: Why not good? What is it that sort of bothers you about that?
- S: Cause hum they think that they know better than me, ohm they don't speak so good English and like they correct me like if they do.

In Stella's account we see the struggle for power, and an attempt by her peers to set boundaries for her language use. She was adamant that she knew better English than these friends and most likely did; they also knew this, but they corrected her for not using what in the context was the accepted code. Perhaps this is done to ensure that she did not feel too superior. And in fact Stella's reaction to being corrected was that she was upset precisely because of their insistence that she was wrong which in turn diminished her own feelings of specialness and superiority connected to being able to command the language.

These incidents are certainly more about power than they are about linguistic ability much like those described by Benjamin *et al.*, (2003) so there is negotiation of power and incidents where this power shifts ownership. This struggle for power connected

directly to language is quite likely due to the high status of English as a global language and the prevalence of its use in youth culture. Additionally there is certainly within the Cypriot context a high status connected to fluency in English. These mixed children are in possession of this highly valued ability and it would appear that their Cypriot peers use these incidents of correction as a means of renegotiating the power relationship, resulting in the bilingual children experiencing moments of inclusion and exclusion connected to their language.

#### 6.3.1.9 Conclusion to Managing bilingualism at School

Several children, such as Christos and Stella, portrayed managing their languages at school in a highly fixed, uncomplicated and rigid manner in which one language was kept for home and the other for school and there was never any unwanted influence of one on the other. This type of rigidity contradicts the research on bilingual language use which demonstrates that languages, though certainly domain specific, are held on a continuum and it would be anticipated that bilinguals would experience occasions where there was some language mixing, codeswitching or translanguaging. What is of importance here is not establishing whether these linguistic experiences are the norm for bilinguals, but the way the children report struggling with any acknowledgement of what the literature tells us can be considered a normal occurrence for bilinguals.

Further, the children, aside from Maria, do not report any recognition by teachers or the school of any role of their bilingualism in the classroom and as a result they are most often left to work things out on their own, with the result being that for some children the necessary help is not provided. Certainly the data collected from the interviews reveals a complex picture of the children's bilingualism within the school context and indicates that there are issues which need addressing in terms of academic achievement, parent and teacher understandings of bilingualism, the use of English within the school

setting and general attitudes towards English, all of which are discussed in detail in the next chapter. Finally, the additional area of focus of the research was what the children reported about their experiences of identity at school and it is to this data that the next section now turns.

### 6.3.2 Introduction to Identity and School Experience

The second area the interviews explored was what the children reported about their identity at school both in terms of how they perceived themselves in the school context and how they perceived that others viewed them. The first area they reported on was a sense of their difference being used against them within the school context often in times of conflict with others. Additionally they reported recognition of being different from their peers, specifically connected to physical or racial differences. The children also reported on their shifting identities within the school context, where they moved through and between being insiders and outsiders with both negative and positive experiences of this movement. Within this movement they recognized a sense of national identity connected to being in school. Finally the interview data revealed discussions by the young people on how the school was essentializing their difference. Each of these areas is discussed in detail in the following sections.

#### 6.3.2.1 Report Incidents of Teasing - Difference Used Against Them.

Early on in our conversations several children reported negative experiences connected to their difference within the school context. One such situation was described by Stella, when I asked her to tell me what it was like to be her at school.

- K: No, just you, not about speaking English and Greek at school, but just you. What is it like to be you at school? It's kind of a big question.
- S: Yeah, sometimes, always I feel good. I mean, I love it, but sometimes when we get in fights, uh, I don't like it so much.
- K: What's it that you say you don't like? Being you?
- S: No, uh, yeah like they make me, they think like that I'm from America and I'm like different from them. And they make fun of me in school, and um the mother's like they don't understand that I mean they don't understand that I'm like them, I think. They think I'm different from, like, other countries.
- K: Do you think that this is how the other kids see you at school? Do they see you as different?
- S: I don't know.
- K: Do your friends at school see you as different?
- S: No.

My intention with the question, "What is it like to be you at school?" had been to lead the conversation into a general discussion on school experience; however, Stella quickly began discussing problems at school. It is interesting that although she acknowledged school as good and liking it, she moved from this into fights at school. Perhaps this was on her mind at the time, as I learnt later from her mother she had been having a hard time at school, and it is at these times of conflict when her difference became a negative. She commented not only on the behaviour and attitude of her schoolmates, but referred to the behaviour and attitude of their mothers implying that this is more than a playground spat. Stella interpreted the negative attitude of her peers and their parents as connected to their not understanding that she was 'like them' that she was not from another county. This draws on the notion that within this conflict, which I discovered did not stem from her being bicultural, her difference from her peers had become an issue and she certainly implied she believed the conflict would have resolved more easily were the others to accept her as one of them. This incident was principally

interesting because as we shall see later in this section, there were times when being different at school was sought after by these children as a means of standing out. The issue Stella appeared to struggle most with here was that she was not the one making the choice of where to position herself within this conflict; her peers were making the choice for her and they had chosen to exclude her from group membership.

In a later conversation with Stella I asked her to tell me about being ‘her’ at school.

K: Of being Stella, you know being Stella who like you said has a mom from America and a dad from Cyprus. How does that make school for you?

S: Um, it’s easy, like my mom, to school sometimes like they tell me like go back to your country and stuff but I tell them that I come from Cyprus, I’m half American, half Cypriot and um, and cause I’m like half a foreigner they make fun of me sometimes.

K: Who is they? When you talk about they make fun of you?

S: My, some of my classmates, some.

Here again Stella recalled how there were times when she was located out of the group by her Cypriot peers, and in fact she indicated that she worked to reinstate herself by outlining that she was Cypriot. To follow up on these conversations with Stella, I began asking other children if they had experienced any problems at school because they spoke Greek and English, or to tell me about the best and worst day they had experienced at school as a bilingual child. As expected there was considerable variety in the experiences of the children. However, many children recounted stories of being teased by their peers. Demetra describes her experience below:

K: Do you think you ever have any problems because you speak both Greek and English at school?

D: Yes.

K: Yes?

D: Sometimes some kids like make fun of me because my dad's English (Um hum) that happened years ago, but now it's OK.

K: Now it's OK? What happened when they made fun of you? Can you tell me about that? Do you remember it?

D: Yeah.

K: Is it OK to tell me what happened?

D: Ohm it wasn't nice but it's OK [she is appears uncomfortable here].

K: When was this?

D: Second grade.

K: And what happened exactly?

D: It was saying stuff about my dad being English (um hum) and it was making fun of him

K: And how did that make you feel?

D: Um, not nice.

K: And was it a lot of kids or was it...

D: One kid.

K: One kid. OK but were there other kids around when he said this? (Yes) so he was saying stuff in front of other kids?

D: Yeah, but it's not only me some other students in my class that they're from their dad or mothers are from another country he made fun of them as well.

K: Um hum, OK and what did you do about it in the end?

D: I told it to my teacher and then he stopped.

K: And then he stopped and was that the only time that you had this problem?

D: Yes.

K: That time how did you feel?

D: [Pause] I felt sad for my dad, and for one minute I felt like I didn't want to be English and that.

Demetra recounted being teased by a classmate about her non-Greek surname and how this made her feel bad. Moreover, it made her feel not only sorry for her dad, who was the object of the teasing but also, turmoil as at these times she did not want to be English. This was a notion I revisited during my second interview with Demetra. I asked her again about being teased at school, and asked her about getting along with her classmates, and she reported the following.

D: Sometimes that they make fun of me, and I don't like it and at that time I don't want to be Greek and English.

K: At that time what would you want to be?

D: Greek.

Interestingly Demetra indicated that this teasing by classmates might have still been an issue as although in the previous interview, she had stated the teasing had been confined to the second grade and a particular classmate. Her response indicated that the teasing for whatever reason was directly connected to her duality of being Greek and English and that it made her feel that she didn't want to be bicultural, or at least English.

This type of negative positioning within the school context because of their dual nationalities was verbalized by several of the children and their parents. Parents often had knowledge of teasing either because it had reached the point that they had had to speak to individual teachers to have it stopped as was the case with Demetra, or because their children had actively reported such events to them (See Summary of Parental Interview Data – Appendix 7). Throughout the study although the children reported being happy at school and no child or parent reported incidents of not wanting to go to school or problems of systematic bullying, almost all the children reported some event or events where their non-Cypriot heritage or that of a parent was used negatively against them by their peers.



### 6.3.2.2 Report Recognition of Physical Differences

During my conversations with the children, there were several occasions where the children credited physical differences from their peers as influencing their experiences at school. Initially, I was hesitant to explore this area of physical (racial) differences as the children are not mixed in the traditional black/white characterization associated with the label of mixed. Still as several children raised it as part of their experience I moved forward to explore this feature of their experience. Discussions here were often related to subtle differences which the children were aware of and characterized as distinguishing them from their peers, as shown in my conversation with Stella, below when we were discussing teasing at school.

- K: Is that something that happens a lot at Dimottico?
- S: Um like they, but like they don't make fun of like you're American and stuff, but they like we they make fun of me like the [points to her face here for the word].
- K: The freckles?
- S: The freckles that I have they make fun of me, and they say that they are pimples or something.
- K: Is that kind of making fun of, or something is that something that happens a lot with all other kids as well? I mean not just with you, is that something that you would say generally say like "Oh, that happens at Dimottico" like. . .
- S: No, not usually.
- K: Not usually, so when this happens to you how do you feel?
- S: I feel sad, bad, I feel very sad.
- K: Oh, OK and then why do you think then that it happens to you, if that's the case if it doesn't happen a lot?
- S: Like if they are bored, or something they just pick on me.
- K: So could it be anyone?

- S: Yeah, anyone, OK except my friend Susanna and my other friend Antigone, they are like my two best friends, that they don't make fun of me.
- K: OK, so the idea of making fun at Dimottico is something that you would say what?
- S: Like you're American go back to your country, you have freckles like pimples they say that, and stuff like that they go on and on.
- K: And when that happens, what do you usually do Stella?
- S: I say it to the teacher (um hum) and the teachers tell it to the principal and the principal tells them to go, to not do it again or they are going to call their mom, their parents and that's all.

Here Stella interpreted these difficult experiences at school as being directly related to both how she looked – referring to being teased about her freckles – and to her dual nationality which she described as being exploited as negative and “American” when the other children picked on her. The awareness of physical differences between these children and their peers was also observed by Maria during our conversation about other mixed children at school and whether her classmates recognized her as being mixed. She stated the following:

- K: OK, so are you the only one who has well aside from the boy who's from Australia and Cyprus you're the only one who is sort of like. . .
- M: Yeah.
- K: English/Greek or American/Cypriot?
- M: Yeah.
- K: OK, and so do your friends know all your friends at school [Yeah]?
- M: Yeah they all know that and they kind of recognize it through my face cause they know that I'm a little bit, I'm American.

Maria recognized a subtle difference to her looks defining her not only as different from her peers but, by her account, also as American. It is difficult to draw in the place of physical or racial differences with this group of children, primarily because physical difference is so often connected to racial differences and confined to a black/white context (Ali, 2003). However, in highly mono-cultural racialized settings like Cyprus (Zembylas, 2011 & 2010b), it should not be surprising that even more subtle differences such as freckles, extremely blonde hair or vividly blue eyes can be observed as markers of difference. Certainly this should not imply that there are no Cypriot children with these same physical markers (blue eyes, blonde hair, freckles) but rather that these markers, added to the children's dual heritage backgrounds, predisposition them to experience a more intense focus on these differences. As Ali (2003) argues if we are going to discuss difference, it is important within our globalized context to explore difference as multifaceted and particularly context specific.

Physical difference may not only manifest itself in the manner recounted by Stella and Maria. For Christos the physical difference of being extremely blonde and blue eyed meant that he often had to actively claim his Cypriot heritage as others automatically perceived him as 'other'.

- K: No, OK and if you think about being at school and your friends at school how would you say they see you? You said like I have a Cypriot part and an American part. When your friends see you like the kid [Yes] in your class what do they see? What do they see? Who do they see?
- C: Ah, that I am Cypriot, and I don't really use my English at school and that I only can talk to them in Greek.
- K: OK so they see you as being Cypriot?
- C: Yes.
- K: OK and how do you feel about that? That they see you as Cypriot?
- C: Good, not excellent but good, I'm fine with it.
- K: Why not excellent?

- C: Cause American, I like talking in English, and I like them to see me in both.
- K: So OK would you prefer if they saw [Yes] both American and Cypriot? OK why do you think they don't see both?
- C: Cause I don't use my English there and I only talk to them in Greek, if I use my English too they would see me both.
- K: Oh, OK. Do they sometimes see you from the way you look?
- C: Yeah, from my hair.
- K: Cause you are very blonde and most Cypriots are not blonde [um hum] so do they ever say anything to you to recognize that you're American because of the way you [yeah] look?
- C: Yeah a lot of kids like first when I meet them they ask, "Are you from England?" cause my hair is like that.
- K: And how do you feel when they say that?
- C: I just say no my mom's from the States and I just have this colour.
- K: That's how I came out.
- C: Yeah.

The conversation revealed the children's awareness of their physical differences and the role these differences played on the perceptions of others. Importantly how the children dealt with these perceptions also differed. In Stella's case she experienced the physical difference of her freckles, used to exclude her during times of conflict with others, as a vulnerable point whereas Maria referred to the fact that the other students could tell she was American from her face as matter of fact, not reporting this difference as used against her. Neither does she feel the need to respond to the acknowledgement of her physical difference or foreignness by reasserting a claim on being Cypriot such as Christos does.

The role of physical difference in the Cypriot context is important because, as evidenced there are certain embodiments of what it means to be Cypriot which is in

essence – Greek Cypriot – and this focus of physical distinction illustrates that this is not solely confined to issues of language. Traditionally Cyprus minority groups such as Armenians, Maronites, Roma have been held as self-contained subgroups within the majority populations, limiting intermarriage and integration while new minority groups have also until recently been considered as separate from Greek Cypriots. The result is that there is a particular physical embodiment of the Greek Cypriot persona which manifests itself in a particular personhood, a personhood which distinguishes this group of children.

### 6.3.2.3 How the Children manage their Identit(ies) at School

Although the children referred to themselves as mixed and were aware of a physical difference between themselves and their peers, they actively claimed identification with being or feeling more Greek /Cypriot at school. For example, in our conversation about being mixed, I asked Andry to tell me about how she felt at school which she explained:

K: OK and at school how do you feel at school?

A: Cypriot, Cypriot.

K: You feel Cypriot at school?

A: Yeah, I don't really speak English at school.

K: Is it just about speaking the language?

A: No it is like how you feel. Like you're happy with it, you don't trash it away somewhere; you don't try to hide it. [Um hum] Sometimes some people say, "You are Canadian go with them, and me Cypriot go with them." that sucks.

K: Yeah, so what do you do?

A: I go with everybody. Does it do this anywhere else?

Andry explained she identified with feeling more Cypriot at school and associated this with not using English. However, when I pressed her about whether this was directly connected to speaking Greek at school she revealed that although influenced by this, the connection was not solely about language. She described a situation of being assigned ethnic group membership by others. This division into groups could result in pressure on children to demonstrate their Greek-ness within the school setting, so as not to be excluded. Andry puzzled over this separation towards the end of the extract where she asked me “Does it do this anywhere else?” she appeared concerned over this type of separation at school, an indication that it may be more of an issue than she had previously acknowledged.

George also discussed this idea of Greek-ness at school when I asked him about his American and Cypriot ‘parts’. He began by explaining that he was both Greek/Cypriot and American. I then asked him to try to explain to me how he viewed himself as American - in an attempt to try to get him to verbalize what he understood as being American. In the excerpt below he began by connecting his American-ness to his mother and the English language, and when I asked him about being Cypriot he directly related this to school.

- K: And if you think about the part of you that’s American, what’s that part?  
A: The English part, my mother, yeah, that.  
K: And what’s the part that’s Cypriot?  
A: Ohm, let’s say well everything else. Here everything’s Cypriot.  
K: Everything’s Cypriot.  
A: Especially at school.  
K: Especially at school. And how do you feel about that that everything else is Cypriot at school?  
A: Ohm, I don’t know, I’m not sure.

As discussed earlier the Cypriot educational system has been characterized as highly hellenocentric (Zembylas and Lesta, 2011; CER 2004; Trimikliniotis, 2004) and it is perhaps not surprising that the children report school as where they feel more Greek/Cypriot. This connection of the dominant culture to the school setting is not unusual; the children are being educated in a fairly monocultural society in a monolingual school setting, and a prevailing idea of education is the transmission of the dominant culture to children (See Section 3.1). Of interest is what the children report about how the school constructs and responds to their duality. An illustration of the complexity of this relationship was demonstrated during my first conversation with Stella in which she narrated an incident when her assertion of her duality at school was dealt with negatively by a teacher.

- K: What would you call yourself would you say you're Cypriot, you're American you're Cypriot and American?
- S: Um Cypriot and American, but I speak better Greek.
- K: You speak better Greek, OK and what's the part of you that American?
- S: Like?
- K: I mean how can you think about the part of you that is American?
- S: I don't know I mean, I don't know.
- K: OK can you think about the part of you that's Greek? Is there something about you that you say this is why I say I'm Greek, or this is why I say I'm American? Or this is why I say I'm Cypriot-American.
- S: My teacher told me that when a lot of teachers came from Bulgaria and stuff, and we were introducing ourselves and I told them that I'm half American and half Cypriot and my teacher, my teacher, told them that I was only Cypriot and my mom's only American and yeah.
- K: How did that make you feel when he said that?
- S: Bad.

During our second conversation, I again asked Stella to tell me about this incident. She reported the same story with additional detail as explained below:

- K: Like, last time remember you told me about how they said you were from Cyprus, and stuff. Can you tell me about what happened, like the story of what happened?
- S: Um, they came to our school from another country, but they are real teachers and they introduced themselves one by one. And [Uh hum] everybody introduced themselves and it was my turn and I said my name, my last name and from where I am and I told them I'm from America. I'm half American and half Cypriot, and the teacher said, "She's from Cyprus."
- K: OK, "She's from Cyprus." And how did it make you feel then when she said "She's from Cyprus." like that?
- S: Like I didn't feel like, I didn't feel good. (Older brother enters flat)
- K: And was there a reason why, I mean why did you say I'm half?
- S: Cause my mom's from America and my dad's from Cyprus. That means I'm half American, and half Cypriot.
- K: OK and why was it important to you then for them to . . .
- S: Ohm, I didn't want to say, to like not say my other country, like I have two countries and I have to say both.
- K: OK so you wanted to say the two countries that you're from.
- S: Yeah.

My intention here was to explore why Stella had felt it was important to state that she was part American in her self-introduction. She explained this at the end of the extract when she stated that she felt because she is both American and Cypriot she had to mention both parts of herself. What is puzzling was not Stella's attempt at using her duality as a means of distinguishing herself from her classmates. There are a multitude of reasons why she may have wanted to distinguish herself from her peers; ultimately her motivation for wanting to do this is less significant than the teacher's response in



correcting her. She had not misrepresented herself; she is both American and Cypriot. The reason why the teacher corrected her in this way is difficult to judge, but certainly Stella characterized it as a correction because she was distinguishing herself from the group by using both her ethnicities to introduce herself to this group of visiting students and teachers. Though perhaps superficially small the event obviously resonated to a great extent with Stella. In the end such events send a message about what is deemed an acceptable or preferred ethnicity to assume at school.

#### 6.3.2.4 Report Embracing their Duality at School

Interestingly even given experiences of being teased about their difference, the children embraced membership in both their communities; they all referred to themselves as being mixed though they acknowledged that there were times as described in the previous section when they felt more of a sense of being Cypriot or not. Additionally, as seen in Stella's story in the previous section there were occasions at school when the children embraced their duality as a means of setting themselves apart from their peers. Andry described the importance of her duality in the following conversation where I asked her to try to explain how she understood being part Cypriot and part Canadian.

- A: Uh, Canada the flag it is like my heart, and Cypriot is my heart ah; Cyprus is my other half heart. I like and Greek but sometimes it is a difficult language but I speak normal. Like all the kids.
- K: So do you think like when you said and Cyprus is part of your heart, how do you describe that then? What does that mean to you?
- A: Um, Cyprus is the place I was born, and the place that I stay with my family, with the first part of my family.

- K: And so when you describe yourself do you talk about yourself as being Cypriot then or just Canadian?
- A: I'm both.
- K: You're both, how are you both? Why are you both?
- A: Cause I'm half, half.
- K: (Laughter) you're half, half. Alright and because your dad is Canadian does that make you Canadian?
- A: Um, my blood is Canadian and Cypriot.
- K: Tell me again, your blood is Canadian and Cypriot? OK, so you feel like you have Cypriot blood and Canadian blood, OK. And what does that mean Cypriot blood and Canadian blood?
- A: Um, it's a mix together.

Andry did not infer any negativity or conflict with this interpretation of who she is. She described it in terms of blood (an interesting choice as the concept of Cypriot nationality is often presented as carried through bloodline See Chapter Two). For Andry she is clearly half and half, "a mix together". Of course as mentioned identity is not experienced in a straightforward uncomplicated manner (See 3.5.3 Multiple and Hierarchical Identities – a challenge to national identity) and neither is it static so the type of duality and movement described by Andry would not be unexpected.

An earlier example of how these children move through their identities can be seen in Christos taking on being Cypriot within the school context perhaps in reaction to the response of peers who often placed him beyond membership because of his very 'foreign look'. The children reported negotiating their duality in this manner as they slide in and out of group membership as context and circumstance dictate. This again differs from the experience of immigrant children in Cypriot schools who are reported to adopt a more static identity with their peers at school where they assert considerable effort to assimilate and soften difference (Section 2.5).

Certainly as Andry later explains these mixed children have the luxury of positioning themselves inside, outside and on the side of the cultural experiences of school. Significant in their ability to adapt in this manner is not only the high status attached to their ‘otherness’ but also the lack of any of the characteristics most often associated with ostracized non-indigenous students at school – poor linguistic abilities in Greek, different dress, skin colour and socioeconomic status (Panayiotopoulos and Nicolaidou, 2007, p 73)

Andry also talked about managing identity at school. We spoke about whether she experienced school differently because of her bilingual background, and what role her Canadian side played there. I began the conversation by asking about how school was and this led to a curious comment about her not feeling the need to hide her bicultural identity at school. One of the most interesting aspects of this exchange was what Andry reported about the place of other mixed or non-Cypriot children at school and how she interpreted their belonging in relation to her own.

- K: So do you think that it makes school the same for you as it does for other kids?
- A: Yeah.
- K: Or does it make school different for you?
- A: Yeah, it’s original.
- K: OK so what do you think it makes school for you? Is school then the same for you as it is for all the other kids who are there?
- A: Yes.
- K: Or is school different for you cause of the English and the Greek?
- A: Sometimes it is uh, a little, um it’s normal, I prefer it this way. Like I’m the only Canadian.
- [General chatter about Canada here]
- A: Yeah, like, I’m the second Canadian kid in the school, and like I’m proud of it. I don’t like, want to hide it or something. Some people want to hide that like they are from Romania or

something, and they don't want to say it. So they don't let them behind so they say like, "I'm from Greece, I'm from Greece."

K: Why do you think they do that?

A: Maybe they are embarrassed or something.

K: Do you feel like that?

A: No.

K: How do you feel then?

A: Strong.

A fascinating element of Andry's comment here is how cognizant she is of the nuance of nationality. She is clear that her being Canadian (or part Canadian) is something that she doesn't feel the need to hide in the same way that perhaps a child who is from a 'less prestigious' country like Romania may. This sense of not needing to hide her otherness is directly connected to the higher social status attached to being from a western country like Canada. She is clear that there is a distinction in how her nationality will be interpreted by others, she is also clear about the fact that otherness particularly otherness which might not be valued as hers is, can and will result in what she calls being "left behind" so that she would be socially excluded because of her nationality. Much of her classmates' lack of confidence to show who they are, is connected to the status of non-western and eastern European countries and their nationals in Cyprus (See Chapter Two). In the Cypriot context non-westerners are often viewed as lower class citizens, manual workers, and illegal workers and associated with negative stereotyping and open discrimination (CER, 2004; Trimikliniotis, 2004). Interestingly for Andry her interpretation of her Canadian-ness within this context is that she can be "strong" about it – it is positive in comparison to other children's nationalities. This sense of not hiding their otherness contradicts the experiences reported by immigrant children in Cyprus who often work to minimize difference by assimilating a Cypriot persona and downplaying their other identity (Partasi, 2010, 2009; Panayiotopoulos and Nicolaidou, 2007)

### 6.3.3 School Experience

#### 6.3.3.1 School Essentializes Difference.

As observed previously most of the accounts of how teachers and the school acknowledge the children's duality have been in terms of the children being called upon to perform their language skills either in English language class or at another formal school event. In an attempt to understand how the children experience diversity and identity in the classroom, I asked them if the teachers in their classrooms generally spoke about difference and diversity or raised issues relevant to children from a variety of backgrounds and if they did how this was done. In the following conversation, George explained what he considered to be the norm regarding issues of diversity at his school.

- K: OK and the teachers in your classes do they talk to the kids about kids being different and people from other countries and things like that?
- G: No I don't think so. [Mumbles here] I haven't heard.
- K: You've never heard. OK and what do you think about that they don't. . .
- G: I don't know. [Mumbles] Maybe? [Pause]
- K: Maybe?
- G: Ohm, well.
- K: OK, so do you think that if they talked about stuff like in classes; how would that make you feel? If the teachers talked in class about how there are people from all different countries? How would that make you feel?
- G: I don't know a bit better. It would help us a bit [pause, mumbles] some kind of hard situations
- K: OK so you think that it might make you feel a bit better, and you would be a bit sort of helped?
- G: Yeah.

George, who has been quite reserved in expressing his experience, struggled to articulate here that as far as he knew these issues regarding diversity and difference were not openly dealt with by teachers at school. His interpretation was that discussions related to these issues would be useful as they might help children like him with “hard situations”. George’s words resonate beyond ideas related to language and cultural differences. George, by both his own account and by the account provided by his parents, is quite reserved and as a result he had struggled with integration and acceptance at school. The fact that teachers and by inference the school curriculum did not provide a clear space for children and teachers to discuss and develop ideas about difference and acceptance presented implications not only for non-Cypriot and mixed children but for all children of difference.

## 6.4 Artefacts

As explained in the previous chapter, in addition to interviews the children were requested to produce a series of artefacts. The first was a Sentence Completion Task which was sent along with the initial consent forms to the families to be completed prior to the first interview (See Section 5.5.4.5). In addition, the children were requested to complete a brochure template entitled “My Advice for a New Bilingual Bicultural Child in my School”. Six children agreed to complete the template and two opted not to. In total, six sentence completion charts were collected from the children, with an additional two conducted orally as part of the second interview and four brochures were collected at the final interview (See Appendix 5).

### 6.4.1 Results of the Sentence Completion Task

The Sentence Completion Task focused on three separate areas reflected in the research questions of the study. The first two areas discussed ideas about being bilingual with the questions “The thing I like best about being able to speak Greek and English is” along with “The thing I like least about being able to speak both Greek and English is.” The main theme that emerged from the children’s answers here was their understanding of the value and roles of both their languages, something also seen in the interview data. The children showed awareness of the positive aspects of their language abilities with responses to the best aspects of speaking Greek and English such as; “I can speak to more people”, “I get to know people better because in Cyprus the languages are English and Greek.” These responses showed recognition of both the high status of their languages, and its value in society. Again this experience differs from what is described for many immigrant and second generation children whose language maintenance often becomes problematic as a preference for the local language leads to language attrition by the third generation (Thomason, 2001, p 9). This is usually because the status and use of the second language takes over (Corson, 1999). Naturally the value placed on maintaining their bilingualism will be varied but fundamentally the high status enjoyed by English as a global and local *lingua franca* (Mcentee-Atalianis, 2004) is likely to encourage maintenance for this group.

The status associated with linguistic abilities in English and the understanding displayed by the children regarding their ability to speak both languages well may have influenced the answers supplied to the second question which asked; “The thing I like least about being able to speak both Greek and English is.” Only two children wrote anything in this question. One commented on having to explain everything to his/her mother as established by the Language Charts many of the non-Cypriot parents report limited use of Greek. The other commented on language related to ideas discussed in the interview with the comment, “When I speak English in front of my friends they keep laughing at me because they think it’s funny sounding”. As discussed earlier this type of teasing may have less to do with peers thinking that English sounds funny - as there is no

question that they have heard and been exposed to a large amount of English within the Cypriot society and general youth/popular culture - than with attempts to re-establish a balance of power in relationships.

The second area the task focused on was school with the questions “What I like best about going to Dimottico is” and “What I like least about going to Dimottico is.” In the responses here the main theme was that the children described school in positive terms. As a result the answers here were responses like, “EVERYTHING! The teachers my friends the school my class.” or “When I see my friends at break time”. These responses reminded us that school is not only about what takes place in classrooms (Section 3.1) and that a large part of the experience of school for children is the social interaction they have with their friends. Thus even a child who might have experienced difficulties at school in the classroom, with teachers or even with some bullying or teasing from his peers may not define the entire school experience as negative. Indeed for many children the social interaction they experience with their friends at school is clearly associated with a positive feeling towards school itself, a sentiment further expressed in the brochures where the children focused heavily on advice about friendships at school.

The awareness of the social reality of school showed in the children’s answers concerning what they least liked about school, with the majority being related to homework, carrying books or science. However there were responses which related directly to issues covered in the interviews with one child referring to not liking that “Sometimes they make fun of me when I speak English” an issue she had also raised in her interviews. Another child referred to a language concern in stating, “I cannot talk English at Dimottico. I would like to speak both languages.” Again this was an issue which was discussed within the interview format. The fact that it presented itself here well-demonstrates that this is a concern which several of the children deal with in the school context.



The final area the task addressed was how the children viewed themselves and what surfaced when they thought about each language individually. The responses to the sentence “When I think about me and who I am I would say I am . . .” presented a confirmation of the variety of identities the children manage. Several of the children responded with a description of themselves with answers like “A ballerina” or “Creative and I love books” or “Shy, friendly, fun” with only a couple of children directly relating this to the notion of the language or identity with “Really good and I am happy I can speak two languages”. All of these comments reflected a positive self-confirmation and a sense of feeling proud and comfortable with whom they were. Only one child related the question to the school context negatively and responded with the comment “A stranger at school, feels different”. This was George who as discussed was struggling to find a place for himself within the school social context.

What the sentence completion task contributed to the trustworthiness of the study (See Section 5.5.7.1) as it was able to provide was confirmation related to issues discussed in the interviews. The responses in the sentence completion exercise indicated that the children were acutely aware of the high value attached to their ability to use English, though they also reported incidents where the position this afforded them was contested by others. Perhaps most importantly, the children reported school as positive and regular. They appeared to understand that social experiences at school will be multi-layered, so that even if there were concerns or negative experiences they did not allow these to disenfranchise or exclude them (Section 6.3.2.1).

#### 6.4.2 Results of the Brochures

In addition to the sentence completion task, I asked the children to complete a brochure entitled “My Advice for a New Bilingual Bicultural Child in my School” (See Appendix 5 for samples). On the back of the brochure, I offered the children the chance to write in their top five pieces of advice and then to complete a list of Do’s and Don’ts for school. As previously the children were asked at the third interview if they would be willing to complete the brochure; six children agreed with two opting not to. Of the six who agreed only four actually completed the task with the two others agreeing, taking the template but even after several reminders not completing it.

The advice given by the children on the brochures focused heavily on the idea of making and keeping friends. These were expressed in comments like “It doesn’t matter what others think you will have a ton of friends!!”, “Be friends with everyone.”, “Support your friends in times of need”, “Make sure you are kind to everyone” “Make friends”, “Don’t mess with the bigger kids.” “Don’t tease others” and “Be friends”. Much of this advice echoed what the children referred to in their Sentence Completion Charts, where they were concerned directly with the social aspect of the school experience and the importance of making friends and avoiding conflicts. Additionally, there were several references to the importance of being true to oneself and being strong. These were references of “Do the thing that is right and listen to your teacher”, “Don’t try to be someone you’re not!”, “Πιστέψτε στον εαυτό σας” (Believe in yourself) “Don’t worry be happy”, “Don’t stop believing”, “No need to be SHY or AFRAID! Stand up for yourself” and “Don’t let people judge you and hurt your feelings.” All of these comments focused heavily on the idea of self-confirmation and developing a positive self-image while at the same time maintaining a sense of self. In terms of language and the classroom, references were made to teachers such as, “Don’t take it personally if your teacher shouts at you”. Then with reference to language “Do share

your English skills with kids that need help”, “Do try your hardest in every class! NEVER STOP!”, “Do let others help you and give you strength, it is not a bad thing to talk two languages.” “You’re LUCKY! It is a great experience to learn and explore two awesome countries☺”, “Speak Greek at school”, “Speak both languages with his parents.”; “Do share your English with others that don’t have the opportunity.” Here again the focus was on the positive aspects of how they felt others should manage their language at school and even how they could use their language skills in an altruistic manner to help others. Overall the brochures demonstrated a sense of resilience in the children. They recognized and acknowledged that school was hard at times, but this withstanding; they exhibited an incredible commitment to self, self-confirmation and resilience throughout the experience.

## 6.5 Parental Interviews

Concurrent to interviews with the children, I conducted interviews with the parents and distributed a Language Use Chart for each parent to complete. This was not an attempt to directly crosscheck information provided by the children and indeed was not clearly part of my initial research design, which I had anticipated would involve solely interviews with the children. However, while trying to establish a more complete picture of the experiences of this group, the value of parental interview emerged as what Miles and Huberman refer to as conceptually-driven sequential sampling (1994, p 27) where understanding one facet reveals aspects to be studied in other areas.

Parental interviews were conducted post child interview and in several cases the children were present during the interview whenever possible both parents were interviewed however, in some cases only the mother was available for the interview. In total twelve interviews were conducted with the parents: the parents of five children were interviewed twice; and due to issues of access two parents were interviewed once, one of whom had two children in the study. All parental interviews were digitally

recorded. The data from the parental interviews related to issues discussed with the children as well as those related to education in Cyprus. Data from the parental interviews proved to be extremely rich; nonetheless, due to concerns over space and the focus of the study, the parental interviews were not fully integrated into the present study. Consequently, a summary of the parental interview data is available in Appendix 7.

## 6.6 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has examined the data collected for this study. It has explored the themes which emerged from the data giving particular importance to that garnered from the interview data. The data demonstrate issues related to language and identity within the school context such as incidents of teasing, a lack of acknowledgement of the children's bilingualism, possible academic language issues with Greek, a separation of languages within the school context, and an unspoken understanding of keeping English use to sanctioned domains or for performance purposes, again limited by the school or teacher. Additionally the data indicate that the children shift and move within their dual national identities but associate the school setting with being Greek. Interestingly the data indicate that the children, though privileged, do experience issues of teasing at school. Moreover they report an understanding of their difference in terms of how they differ physically from their Cypriot peers. Finally the data indicate that despite any issues the children experience at school, they enjoy school and demonstrate a strong sense of resilience in the face of these difficulties.

The next chapter will discuss these issues by exploring how this data relates to the literature on language, identity and school experience and what can be garnered from the experiences the children have reported.

## Chapter Seven: Discussion

### 7.0 Introduction

This study sought to explore the experiences of a group of bilingual, Greek/English speaking children enrolled in state elementary school in the Republic of Cyprus. As with similar small scale case studies the intention is not to draw out grand theories or narratives (See section 5.1.1.1 Boundaries of this Case) but for the results to be used to influence and encourage further research on this under-researched group of children in Cyprus. Consequently, the data are explored within the two main sub-categories of the study: findings under Insight into Managing Language at School and Insights into Experiences of Identity at School. The findings on language at school are discussed in the first half of this chapter under three themes: The role of Greek at school, the role English at school and the schools' response to the children's bilingualism. The second part of the chapter discusses the findings on identity at school by exploring identity from two perspectives: the children's perceptions of themselves at school and their perceptions of how others viewed them at school. Finally the chapter examines the influence that race, nationalism and policy play in the children's overall experiences of language and identity at school. Examining the data in this way reveals important insight into the integration of these children within the school system and the manner in which Cypriot primary schools are reported to respond to issues of multiculturalism and bilingualism in connection with this group.

### 7.1 Insight into Managing Language at School

Issues of language use at school were discussed in detail with the children and their parents. In general the data revealed that there were issues of academic achievement or fluency levels in Greek, managing English at school particularly in terms of keeping

their languages separate and its use for performance purposes. Finally, also emerging was the children's recognition of the value of English, the informal space for English use at school, struggles over power and the language and accommodations made in managing their bilingualism within the school context.

#### 7.1.1 The Children and the Greek Language at School

The findings on language indicate that the children experience concerns with managing Greek within the classroom and in completing homework. These varied from the expected experiences of bilingual language use, such as struggling to find the correct word, to a more general concern over academic fluency levels in Greek. As a response to these perceived concerns with academic ability in Greek, several of the parents reported employing private tutors outside of school to help with school and homework. Additionally, though no child interviewed had been explicitly identified by the school as struggling academically due to linguistic issues, several of the children recounted incidents where language at school was hard. As these experiences indicate for some children, there are suggestions of problems with managing academic Greek at school and these findings certainly indicate the children's language abilities in Greek should be explored. It is important to emphasize, I am not advocating that all simultaneous bilingual children will need additional linguistic support. However, as several of the children and their families voiced concern over academic language abilities in Greek (See Sections 6.3.1.4 and 6.3.1.5), there is evidence to inspire further investigation.

This possibility of needing additional linguistic support is also established in the literature on bilingualism. Though little research has been done specifically on simultaneous bilinguals in monolingual schools, our understandings of bilingualism show that languages are not held separate, and there is therefore influence from one to the other. Neither is each language developed to the same competency level, as fluency

levels will be influenced by context and use. And as Baker advocates, it is important for us to view the bilingual as “holistic” (2006, p 12). Thus these simultaneous bilingual children would not necessarily be expected to maintain competency levels in Greek exactly on par with English or vice versa, particularly as the two languages exist along a continuum (Haugen, 1969 in Baker, 2006) which is highly influenced by domains of use. As a result, with the children using both languages every day (See 6.1) it is reasonable that a bilingual child could enter school with one language more dominant than the other (Meisel, 2004), thereby warranting the need for additional linguistic support with the language of instruction.

In addition the information from the Charts indicates the children experience a division of language use domains, a “complementarity principle” (Grosjean, 2004, p 34) with which Greek is primarily used at school and English for home and communication with non-Cypriot parents, indicating a separation of domains. This separation should not imply that the children hold each language equally but rather, should draw attention to the language use the children practice outside of the school environment, where a large portion of their day takes place in English. As a result, if a child reserves the use of Greek primarily for school and spends the rest of her day interacting with her mother in English, this linguistic division closely mirrors the experience of second language learners and as such, it would not be unreasonable to expect to see similar language development in these children. This separation, added to what the children and families have previously reported about struggles with language, are indications that Cummins’ (1979) concept of a divide between BICS-CALP so that basic interpersonal communication skills verses cognitive-academic language proficiency could be an issue, particularly as the children’s communicative skills in Greek do not necessarily reflect their academic achievements in the language. Primarily the data clearly indicate that there is enough evidence to suggest further research into this area to establish whether the children could benefit from extra linguistic support in Greek.

### 7.1.2 The Greek Language and the Role of the Teacher

Also of concern to how the children experience Greek at school is the question of why teachers who know a child is bilingual are reported as nonresponsive of any role this bilingualism might play in the child's language development and academic achievement at school. Why do the teachers and school appear so nonresponsive to any of the children's learning needs related to their bilingualism even in the face of parents reporting their children could have benefited from additional academic support with Greek? It is unlikely parents would report knowledge of their children struggling with language issues – even to the extent of paying for private tuition outside of school – while teachers remained unaware of any academic or linguistic issues in the same children.

This lack of acknowledgement suggests a series of possibilities. First, the teachers may not recognise the role of the children's bilingualism in their language development because this group is not documented as bilingual. This is because having been born in Cyprus; the children are registered by the MoEC as local students. Additionally, as the MoEC does not currently make any accommodation for the idea of locally produced bilinguals and continues to equate multicultural education with assimilation (Zembylas, 2010a & b; Annual Report, 2011), this group will be overlooked because the children do not fit the stereotypical mould of a bilingual child portrayed by the MoEC one synonymous with immigrant (Annual Report, 2011), teachers may simply place this group of children within the larger category of Greek speakers and thereby remove the possibility of the children's' bilingualism influencing school performance. Assigning the children the general category of Greek speakers should not be interpreted as a form of the teachers' trivializing or displaying indifference to the needs of this group, but may be the result of an underprepared teaching population. Currently for primary school



teachers, most of whom are educated through the University of Cyprus, there is no specific required course on bilingualism and certainly no course beyond approaches of teaching Greek as an additional language. Accordingly there is no training provided to address the teaching of bilingual children within the monolingual classroom (See Appendix 1 for excerpt from 2011 UCY prospectus) which addresses bilingualism beyond the focus of teaching Greek as a second language.

Furthermore though the MoEC provides in-service training to teachers, it focuses on teachers who work at schools identified as having high numbers of non-Greek speaking children and many teachers are even unaware such training programs are available (Panayiotopoulos and Nicolaidou, 2007). Consequently, even if teachers are sympathetic to the learning needs of this group, they are influenced by the MoEC continual focus on multiculturalism through assimilation, and it is unlikely they have any personal, policy or educational resources to utilize in providing specific learning support.

This inability to address the needs of this group may also be subject to the perpetuation of the popular misconception that simultaneous bilinguals should be balanced (Meisel, 2004) and are therefore simply double monolinguals (Garcia, 2009; Genesee, 2004), holding each language equally. A concept which even though it has been shown to be elusive and deceptive within the literature (Baker, 2006; Fishman, 1989) is still very much present in how bilinguals are understood by the layperson, and may play a role in how the children, parents and teachers respond to academic language needs. If there is the assumption that languages are separate but equal, then there may be an expectation that once a child enters school, she simply and uncomplicatedly ‘switches over into Greek’ with no influence of her other tongue or of translanguage (Garcia, 2009) and as such is expected to produce and use the language in the same manner as her monolingual peers.

Finally there is an economic and social issue at work as well. Studies on the experiences of migrant children at state elementary school have often recorded teachers' ascribing a lack of academic achievement to external factors, such as the stereotypical negative status attached to migrants by the society, low economic status, lack of a common mother tongue for communication with parents and a general lack of interest and contact on the part of parents with the schools (Theodorou, 2008; Zembylas, 2010a & b). In the case of these children, teachers will recognize the "habitus" the parents occupy having social, economic and community standing as middle class and well educated, and this may influence teachers and schools to displace needs for academic support onto the home by extending an expectation of intervention on the part of the parents through private lessons or extra parental support, a not uncommon practice in Cyprus. As a result if the parents do not raise concerns over their child's language learning and the child is viewed by the teacher as 'managing', then it is unlikely academic language concerns will be addressed.

### 7.1.3 The Greek Language, Parents and the School

Perhaps surprisingly it is not only the teachers who appear reluctant to have the schools identify a need for additional academic support for these children, but also the families. So much so that although many parents anecdotally reported feeling that their child could have used additional support, they also reported that they had not pursued explicit conversations with individual teachers or the school regarding learning accommodation to address these needs. Remarkably this took place in the face of several families paying for private lessons in Greek as a means of addressing language issues they felt their child was experiencing. Alongside this the same families reported maintaining considerable contact with the school by way of PTA involvement, for example.

These factors indicate that not only were the parents concerned about linguistic abilities in Greek, but they also maintained relationships with the school which would have made requesting help relatively straightforward. However, the parents did not report actively raising issues of language learning with their children's teachers or the school. Why then, if a parent had identified that her child was in need of additional support and had access to the school and teachers, wouldn't they request any help from the school? The reason for the reluctance to address this is suggested by the families' responses to my question of whether they would have 'wanted' their child to have had additional language support at school had it been offered (Appendix 7). Almost unanimously families rejected this suggestion with the main concern being that they believed this type of intervention would negatively stigmatize their child. Parents were concerned that having their child removed for additional language support alongside immigrant children, who are clearly negatively stigmatized by the general public, could result in the negative stigmatization of their own children. This was of special concern for the parents who indicated Dimottico was a choice they made because they specifically wanted their children to be integrated into local neighbourhoods and the Cypriot society. These concerns were based on their understanding of the type of intervention provided which, they rightly assumed, could involve removing the child from the classroom for periods of time during the week, as current policy regarding linguistic support for bilingual students states: "A flexible system of intervention within the ordinary timetable exists. This involves placing bilingual pupils in a separate class for some hours of the week, for intensive learning of the Greek language and specialized assistance according to their specific need" (MoEC, 2010, p 328). An additional factor not directly touched upon by the parents, but relevant is the fact that there is a culture of extra lessons in Cyprus, even with students at primary school. Subsequently children's academic problems are often addressed through extra lesson teaching outside of the school context and as a result parents may have subconsciously relieved the school of

its responsibility to address their child's language needs by taking it upon themselves to provide this additional academic support.

#### 7.1.4 The Role of English at School

##### 7.1.4.1 Children as Aware of the Value of English

Key to our understanding of how the children experience language at school is the conviction that children are active agents of their own realities and as such are actively involved in negotiating and constructing their own identities and spaces within the school setting. For this group of children, these negotiations influence the manners in which they navigate using English within school. The first area the children display this agency is in how they claim ownership of their English within school. Undoubtedly the high value and status afforded English both locally and globally influence the manner in which the children claim English as their language in several ways. First, the children do not display the expected signs of language attrition commonly associated with immigrant children (Thomason, 2001) and in children of immigrants who speak a lower status language (Baker, 2006, p.71). On the contrary, the children actively engage with the language and display an awareness of the high status it enjoys as a world language. Secondly, the status of the language certainly appears to influence the ownership the children claim over the language. This differs from the experience of immigrant children, who often place considerable importance on their integration and the ability to use Greek well (Theodorou, 2011, p 249 – 248; Partasi, 2010; 2009).

Furthermore the children display a sense of agency in their use of English at school, even while acknowledging that there is little or no formal space created for English beyond a teacher - prescribed role in English class, or the occasional tokenistic and questionable performance for a school play. They recount how they use English outside

the classroom as a means of negotiating and cementing relationships with other English speakers and as a *lingua franca* to connect with non-Greek speaking children. This attempt by the children to claim a separate space for their ‘other language’ may be a response to the lack of a formal acknowledgement of their English linguistic abilities by the school and teachers. As a result, the children use their language skills in other domains at school like on the playground, and report that they would enjoy being able to use more of the language at school (See 6.4.1 Results of the Sentence Completion Task). Important to this negotiation is the fact that these children do not know English at the expense of knowing Greek; they are Greek and English bilingual. Thus use of English at school is often a deliberate decision on their part, and not a case of an immigrant child reverting to her mother tongue because she may not yet have the fluency to express herself in Greek. When this group use English to talk to others on the playground, it is a reflection of a conscious decision to wield what they know is a high value, high status language.

Nonetheless, negotiations over English at school are not uncomplicated and are influenced by the overarching power dynamics of peers, the classroom and the school. Even though the children are aware of the value of knowing English, speak it between themselves and as a *lingua franca* with others, they report needing to be cautious with this ability. For example, while they characterize English classes as easy, they are at the same time careful with how much they display so as not to be accused of showing off. Additionally several children talked about being corrected by their peers for the manner in which they phrased a statement, or their use of American or British colloquial phrases or pronunciations, features which serve as indicators of their proficiency in the language. These incidents of correction can be seen to constitute attempts to regulate power within the school setting, precisely because English is a high status, high value language. Consequently children who can use this language at an ability level which sets them apart from their monolingual peers are essentially knocked back into place through the teasing or ridiculing of that which has afforded them status to begin with –

their language fluency. In this way the power is shifted from the bilingual child and she is not allowed to be a ‘show off’.

This movement in status is not uncommon within the social world of the school where we have seen there is often a jostling for position and place, a reflection of the micro-political perspective of the school (Ball, 1987) and a common feature of school experience where children jostle for position (Benjamin *et al.*, 2003; Pollard, 1987). In the end, the need of others to exert control over the bilingual children’s language abilities by regulating their language production through teasing or exerting power may also be influenced by the school environment itself. A school environment which exalts monolingualism in Greek and idealizes the Greek speaker in addition to exerting and promoting ethnocentrism and nationalism by asserting the Greek identity as the desirable status for the ideal pupil (See Educational Reform Committee, 2004, p 95 for discussion of the philosophical and political agenda of Greek-Cypriot education). Garcia (2009) refers to such perceptions as stemming from a hegemonic approach to language in which monolingualism is taken as the norm (Erickson, 1995; Foucault, 1991) so that children who do not fit the image of what is considered the norm are vulnerable to this type of teasing, even if this difference is only slight.

#### 7.1.5 Being Bilingual in State Elementary School in Cyprus: implications for policy

The lack of recognition of this group of students as bilingual and therefore the possibly of any additional linguistic input, along with the manner in which teachers appear to negate the children’s bilingualism, is undoubtedly influenced by the highly monocultural monolingual focus of the curriculum and educational policy in Cyprus (Zembylas, 2010a; Educational Reform Committee, 2004; Trimikliniotis, 2004).

Certainly this monocultural attitude plays a role in the narrow definition of a bilingual student applied by the MoEC. The MoEC defines bilingual students as “other language speakers” (Ministry of Education and Culture Annual Report 2010, p 328) a term which in practicality equates to immigrant and primarily as immigrant students in need of assimilation through the teaching of Greek. This assimilation is directly connected to the ideas of multiculturalism expressed by the MoEC which it expresses in terms of teaching Greek to “other language students”. A policy which is exclusively focused on the assimilation of non-Cypriots as demonstrated by the following extract outlining the implementation of measures for multiculturalism which it categorizes, “. . . as measures for language support, which refer to the learning of Greek as a second language and measures for facilitating the smooth integration of groups with different cultural identities” (Annual Report, 2010, p 328).

The report continues by defining how multicultural education is demonstrated within school; “This means that it is of vital importance to provide an education that supports the language and distinctive cultural features of the various ethnic groups, but also to provide an education that helps bilingual pupils to learn Greek as their second language for a smoother transition to the Greek Cypriot society” (Annual Report, 2010, p 327). Ultimately the result has been that the MoEC’s approach to bilingual students and multiculturalism has been criticized for being extremely fixated on assimilation through the teaching of Greek (Zembylas, 2011; Zembylas and Lesta, 2011; Language Policy Profile, 2004, pp 19 & 28). Consequently, the MoEC’s struggle over multicultural education means it has completely overlooked the possibility of there being local bilingual students who may not need “the smoother transition into Greek Cypriot society” but who may need support with the development of their Greek language skills. The limited definition of a bilingual provided by the MoEC reflects a similar situation to that raised by Helot and Young (2002) where the elite term of bilingual is reserved

for an exclusive additive bilingualism, in cases where native children add an additional, usually high status language, to their linguistic repertoire. So in the case of the simultaneous bilingual child who enters school with two languages, one of which is usually a lower status, less desirable language, the school system views the additional language as a nuisance and something the school must work to subtract from the child. Whatever the situation, it is clear that the limited definition of bilingual student used by the MoEC results in the lack of recognition for the possibility of other types of bilingual speakers.

Important to this debate is that though Cyprus is often characterized as historically multicultural, it has a school system which from its inception has been traditionally separate. Greeks were educated in Greek school, Turks in Turkish schools and indigenous minorities like Armenians and Maronites in community schools (See Section 2.2.1 and 2.4.2 for a full discussion). As a result historically there has been limited need to focus on issues of acceptance, inclusion, bilingualism and multiculturalism as the school system has been insulated from the realities of the changing society. This separation has, I believe, resulted in the creation and continuation of a school system which remains monolithic in the face of the growing multicultural environment of Cyprus.

#### 7.1.6 Conclusions to Language Concerns

The data reveal that currently the possibility of simultaneous bilingual speakers in Cypriot schools being identified as a distinct group and thereby being eligible to receive linguistic support if needed is marginal. This appears to be mainly due to the synonymous use of bilingual for immigrant student which has meant that this group of ‘home-grown bilinguals’ is completely overlooked within current educational policy.



Indeed even in view of the educational reforms which have recently begun to take place they are still not recognized as a distinct group (See Report on Inclusion in Education, 2008). Consequently support for bilingual students provided by the MoEC continues to focus on identifying students who are essentially learning Greek as a second language. The current picture is one where any learning needs stemming from the children's bilingualism and any benefit that could be garnered from their bilingualism is only acknowledged in an ad hoc manner based on the goodwill of the classroom teacher or for performance purposes.

This lack of official acknowledgement not only reflects a narrowness on the part of the MoEC, but in terms of language teaching issues it also stunts any response to bilingual learners' language learning needs, such as understanding code-switching and translanguage, competency issues and the influence of another tongue (See Section 3.3 for a discussion of bilingualism). Added to this, I would argue that the apparent resistance by the MoEC to embrace a more inclusive policy on other language speakers in schools contravenes the recommendations of reports regarding the importance of maximizing the multilingualism of the society. Recommendations such as those made in the Language Policy Profile for Cyprus which states:

“An important, but less recognized, potential is represented by the languages of the new minorities in Cypriot society. As in a number of countries, there is as yet no overall policy about how such languages might be developed in public education. A more conscious effort to value and support the cultural heritage and enrichment which the range of languages brings would represent an asset for an outward-looking Cyprus in its dealings with other countries.” (2003 - 2005, p 28)

Furthermore, the data indicate that because these children do not fit the mould of what teachers, schools and the MEC consider a bilingual child 'should' look like - being white, middle class, English speakers with educated parents - they appear to be more easily ignored. The position of bilingual children in Cypriot education indicates that if the children were from backgrounds which fit the pervasive negative stereotypes that have become associated with immigrant groups in Cyprus, for example, were they children of low socio-economic standing, with parents characterized as disinterested, had different religions and manners of dress while lacking command of the Greek language (Panayiotopoulos and Nicolaidou, 2007, p 74), then by association there would be an increased chance of their being identified as a distinct group of bilingual speakers. This should not be seen as to condone the pervasiveness of these negative stereotypes or their harmful impact on the learning experiences of these non-Cypriot children in the school system. However, I would posit that it is precisely because the children are considered to be from 'good families' with Greek names and with parents who are actively involved in the school community that they are so easily ignored.

Defining the children as solely Greek-Cypriot means there is a continued implicit denial of their bilingualism. In so doing the MoEC fails to recognize this group as a deserving community which has and needs considerations of justice. Indeed one interpretation of this lack of recognition by the MoEC is that it constitutes a covert policy (Corson, 1999) in which the educational system in an effort to ensure the assimilation of all children as wholly and exclusively Greek-Cypriots ignores their differences, thereby furthering the goal of producing good Greek-Cypriot citizens for society.

Another reason why this group continues to be overlooked may be that accusations of racism and indifference cannot be easily made precisely because they are 'white', Western and privileged. For this group the absence of racial markers associated with the negative immigrant stereotypes perpetuated within society likely results in the children

not being considered too threatening to the status quo. Consequently, ignoring the learning needs, presence and distinct language needs of this group do not contravene any lines of current political correctness, multiculturalism as defined in Cyprus or social inclusion. Still the understandings based on the ethnicity and socio-economic position of this group should be challenged. Certainly the children do not constitute a traditional minority group as defined either by the Cypriot constitution or more widely held understandings of minority groups. Nevertheless, overlooking these children because they are not disadvantaged ‘enough’ is in and of itself: hypocritical, particularly if we are interested in a just society. Social justice cannot be used solely in the case of groups which fit pre-existing racial, social or economic profiles designed to categorize them as worthy within a particular context (See Section 5.3.2 and 5.3.3). Social justice demands that all children regardless of their backgrounds have the right to be accounted for, represented and accommodated within society (Williamson *et al.*, 2007). Indeed the data suggest that the MoEC needs to examine issues of personal, cultural and institutional racism within the education system in Cyprus and consider employing concepts from a critical multiculturalism to address these issues.

## 7.2 Insights into Experiences of Identity at School

The second area the study undertook to explore was what the children reported about their identity experiences at school. Important to any exploration of identity is the acknowledgement of how identity is understood in a given context; accordingly, the investigation here was based on the understanding of identity in terms of fluidity and hierarchy (Omoniyi, 2006) allowing for identity to be permeable, changing and context specific (See Section 3.5). As a result, it was not the intention to ‘discover’ an expression of identity by the children which was fixed or static, and certainly their reports about their experiences of identity at school are neither one dimensional nor unified, but shift and change as they move through their context specific cultural

affiliations. The next section explores issues of identity at school in terms of how the children perceive themselves within the school, their perceptions of others and their sense of national identity at school through ‘feeling Greek’, along with issues of power, race and teasing they experience at school. The section concludes by discussing the role of difference blindness theory in these experiences.

### 7.2.1 Expressions of Identity at School

One of the main results of this exploration into the children’s identities was the verification of identity as fluid and hybrid for these children. The children commonly included both their national or ethnic identities when referring to themselves and thereby expressed a duality in their identities – American/Cypriot, British/Cypriot or Canadian/Cypriot.

However, precisely because of the nature of identity and its fluidity, there were an equal number of occasions where the children identified variously with being or feeling more Cypriot or other. Pointedly due to the highly politicized nature of identity in Cyprus (Spyrou, 2000, 2001, 2006; Trimikliniotis, 2004) merely the selection of an easily workable term with which to refer to children’s Cypriot nationality was complicated, resulting in the sliding through of references to being Cypriot, Greek/Cypriot, mixed and even at times using language as a reference – Greek or English. Due to the complex nature of identity within the Cypriot framework, the study sought to explore the children’s expressions of identity at school within the overarching construct of the Cypriot society, understanding identity as interwoven with context. Issues of historical and political perspective as well as national, ethnic and racial context, all play a pivotal role in the Cypriot context and as such were considered important aspects of the identity experiences of the children. Nonetheless, what the children reported regarding how they

interpreted and negotiated their school experience of being bicultural within a highly monocultural school setting was the focus of the study, and the children's expressions regarding friendships and teacher-student relationships, relationships with the school and the role of policy were considered to be equally important.

#### 7.2.1.1 Children's Expressions of Identity at School: feeling Greek

One of the main areas of interest was an attempt to understand how the children experienced their own national/ethnic identity at school. As such we have seen that even though the children generally reported that they were 'mixed' or 'both' they also reported a strong association between school and feeling Greek (as seen in Section 6.3.2.1). In interpreting why this was the case it was noted that the children often referenced issues of language where the absence of the use of English in the school setting resulted in expressions of feeling more Greek at school. This expression of 'Greekness' at school is noteworthy particularly because the children also reported experiencing times when they wished they could express more of their 'otherness' within the school setting, as indicated for example in many of the statements made in the sentence completion activity (See 6.4.1). However due to the school system's focus on 'Greekness' as the desirable identity, they often worked to more actively claim their Greek-Cypriot identity at school.

The correlation between the monolingual school system in which the children are immersed and a sense of feeling Greek is not surprising particularly in the face of the highly hellenocentric and xenophobic characterization of the Cypriot school system (CER, 2004: Zembylas and Lesta, 2011, See Section 3.3.2 for a discussion of nationalism in the Cypriot school system). This is particularly influenced by issues of multiculturalism and intercultural education which, although they are currently being explored and the MoEC contends it is involved in offering multicultural/intercultural

education (See Annual Report, 2010), still currently states as a fundamental goal of primary education to, “Develop social understanding, belief in human values, respect for ‘our cultural heritage’ (my emphasis) and human rights, appreciation of beauty,” (MEC Annual Report 2011, p 5). Undoubtedly the use of the term “our heritage” is a considerable improvement over previous expressions used by the MoEC such as in the Development of Education National Report (2001) which listed as a priority of education the goal of: “Retaining the national identity and keeping alive the memory of the occupied areas in Cyprus” (MEC National Report, 2001, p 3). However the unyielding focus on a singular collective, sanctioned identity is expressed in the words “our heritage” which, by use of the adjective ‘our’, projects an all-encompassing and collective heritage which is shared and reified by all members of the society equally.

Conceptualizations such as these delineate the type of citizenship the school seeks to nurture and are based on a one-dimensional definition of what it means to be Cypriot and ultimately Greek-Cypriot. This will certainly impact how the school, teachers and students view all those who fall beyond the parameters of this definition, be they immigrant or domestic. Consequently, though seemingly insignificant, the continued focus on such a limited shared common identity particularly within a school system characterized as highly hellenocentric and xenophobic (Trimikliniotis, 2004) has repercussions for those who differ.

Undoubtedly within the Cypriot context it is challenging to separate the political from education because here, as in many other countries, education is viewed as a medium through which issues related to national agendas can be forwarded and these agendas will be controlled by those who hold power – the dominant class (Apple, 2003, 2000; Jenkins, 2002, p 105; Bourdieu, & Passeron, 1977) Yet, in Cyprus these agendas are impacted by the outstanding national issue of the Cyprus Problem – the division of the island. Obscuring issues of identity further is an on-going crisis over the lack of a collective national identity – Cyprus is a country where the Greek flag is often flown in place of the Cypriot one, where the national anthem is the Greek one. These are issues

so thorny that, as stated earlier, even simple choices such as words to express nationality can become complicated and difficult. The lack of a common national identity is of particular concern in the face of the MoEC's commitment to the transmission of a sense of respect for "our heritage", as explanations of exactly whose heritage this is are contested (See Papadakis, 2008). Added to this, one could argue the Europeanization of the educational system due to European accession in 2004 has forwarded an additional agenda of multiculturalism and inclusion in its policies. These have been placed onto an educational system and society which, by several accounts, were and still are not yet ready to accept these changes (Phillipou, 2007). Ultimately what emerges is a disjunction between the policies and rhetoric of MoEC documents, which espouse an inclusive multicultural educational system respectful of diversity and difference, and the experiences of children within schools who report an environment focused on an insecure nationalism within which the safest identity to claim is that of Greek-Cypriot.

#### 7.2.1.2 Children's Perceptions of How Others View Them at School

##### 7.2.1.2.1 Being Teased

Why these children, who do not share common characteristics, associated with vulnerable groups such as immigrants or Turkish Cypriot children, report incidents of exclusion or teasing related to otherness is complicated. Nevertheless if we apply the broader Cypriot context and construction of 'other' to these children and take into account the high correlation between 'other' and negative attitudes, then perhaps it is not so surprising. The school system as an extension of society is heavily influenced by a nationalistic, racist rhetoric (Spyrou, 2009; Trimikliniotis and Demetriou, 2009; Zembylas, 2008). It has been argued elsewhere (Zembylas, 2010) that because Cyprus is a divided and segregated society due to the continuing issue of the Cyprus Problem (See Section 2.1), issues of difference such as racism have become fused to other issues

specifically nationalism. Consequently there is not only nationalism within schools but also racism; indeed it has been contended that within the Cypriot context there is a general demonizing of diversity. I would argue that in contexts where there is this general negativity towards difference and where children are socialized into this rhetoric, these children will not demonstrate exclusivity in how they apply this negativity. Consequently they will not only treat negatively those who belong to the definitive group of 'other' as in 'the Turk' but in fact elements of this general negativity towards 'others' will permeate and seep into how they conceptualize all 'others'. What results is an overflow of negative attitudes so that negativity towards one group extends to other vulnerable groups as well. Thus there is the creation of a continuum of negativity or discrimination towards others. This continuum stems from those most 'unlike us' towards those most 'like us'. This demonizing of difference is a consequence of the general attitudes towards others displayed in society because you cannot instil or consent to demonizing or devaluing diversity and then expect children, or adults for that matter, to distinguish in how this discrimination is applied. If children are socialized to think negatively about immigrants and/or Turks as 'others' then this negative sentiment of the 'other' will not be limited, and as such it should not be surprising to see the negative characterization of 'others' manifest itself at least in some degree towards all 'others' particularly in times of conflict.

One additional factor in why these bilingual children, who enjoy a link to a high status language and identity, experience incidents of teasing at school could be that these incidents reflect an attempt by the majority to regulate and control power over others within the school. Precisely because within the social boundaries of the school, Greek-Cypriot children hold a higher status than these bilingual children, the Greek-Cypriot children may view the use of English, a high status language and globalized identity, as menacing to the social hierarchy of the school (See Theodorou, 2010, p. 8 for a discussion on social boundaries based on ethnicity within Cypriot schools). Additionally as discussed by Zembylas, "Children's identities are racialized and



ethicised from a young age” (Zembylas, 2010b, p 313) and in the case of Cyprus “Greek Cypriot children are particularly sensitive to skin colour, race and ethnicity and have a strong emotional investment in themselves as white Greek and of Turkish speaking children as invariably ‘Turks’” (op cit., p 325). Important to this debate is the understanding that the high status enjoyed by the Greek-Cypriot children is not simply immovable or always collective as it will be shifting and fluid and as a result power dynamics within the school context will be influenced by all of the markers of identity including, but not limited to, language. This is because they will be multi-layered temporal and presumed permeable. Thus superior status enjoyed by the Greek-Cypriot students should not be viewed as static or fixed as power is fluid, contextual and relational in its nature (Foucault, 2007). As Benjamin *et al.*, contend there will be positioning and repositioning of hierarchies within the school because they are never static as students “take up, resist and manoeuvre” (2003, p 548). Theodorou (2010) posits it is important that we understand power dynamics as more than merely a diametrically opposed position of ‘us’ and ‘them’ between native and immigrant children. Thus jostling for a better position in the hierarchy of the school environment, even a temporary and fleeting position, will be viewed not only as desirable but also as attainable (Benjamin *et al.*, 2003). Thus bilingual students may enjoy attempting to ‘steal the limelight’ by demonstrating their linguistic abilities in English. Likewise and perhaps as a direct reaction to these occurrences, these attempts to redistribute or seize power are likely to be deemed threatening to prevailing power structures and the *status quo* and therefore reacted to. As a result non-sanctioned uses of the language are dealt with by ridiculing and teasing, differences in pronunciation are ridiculed, and as we shall see in the next section racial differences are highlighted as a means of minoritizing and hence facilitating the dominant group reassert its social status and power.

#### 7.2.1.2.2 The Role of Race in Children’s Experiences of Identity at School

In her application of difference-blindness rather than colour-blindness to the Cypriot context, Theodorou viewed Cypriot society as an essentially mono-racial environment (2010, p 6). She contends that the immigrant children in her study, mostly from eastern European backgrounds, do not racially differ from their Cypriot peers and as a result even though they are assigned the label of foreigner, this is based on differences in language and ethnic background. In this way their negative experiences at school stem mainly from the external differences of language, culture, social and economic status along with the lack of integration of the children's families within the school environment.

Applying the concept of difference blindness to the experiences of this group of children reveals elements of a similar experience to those of the immigrant children in Theodorou's study. The children report incidents similar to those encountered in Theodorou's study they restrict the use of their other language at school, adhering to Greek in the classroom domain, they experience incidents of racist name-calling and participate in folkloric performances of their otherness (2010, pp 10 - 13). However difference blindness alone does not explain their experiences and although relevant, I would contend these experiences are not exclusively due to difference blindness. As mentioned, the children do not demonstrate most of the external markers used to ascribe difference to other non-Cypriot children in elementary school in Cyprus. They are part Cypriot, born in Cyprus, Orthodox, Greek speakers and enter school with shared membership in the cultural background and language of the majority. Additionally they enjoy a middle class socioeconomic position and integration and connection to the school particularly through parental involvement in schools through for example the PTA.

Difference blindness leads us to conclude that for children from 'European' backgrounds it is other external markers rather than racial ones which account for many

of the negative experiences they have within the school system. This is because othering takes place on ethnic and cultural lines (Theodorou, 2010). However, these children, unlike a child from Pakistan or the Philippines, are considered to be 'like' Cypriot children and it is therefore assumed racial markers of difference are missing. Nevertheless based on the experiences of the children, I would posit there are definitive markers of difference between this group and the majority of Cypriot children, ones which the children, their peers and teachers are aware of and which influence how they are majoritized or minoritized within school from moment to moment.

As Connolly (1998) contends children are racialized by the messages of home and society before they enter the school gates, and this racialization leads them to draw out differences within the school context. Certainly being white English language speakers will afford the children a symbolic capital (Connolly, 1998, Heller 1998 & 2003) which would not be afforded a child from a different ethnic background. But racialization, like identity, is not a static concept and it is not solely about discrimination and prejudice. It is about the power of assigning group memberships of 'in groups' and 'out groups' – those who are like us and those who are not like us. As stated previously it is reasonable for us to expect that this power will shift so we will experience times when we are 'in' and others when we are 'out' as even more subtle difference is noticed.

Indeed within this study the children have referred to others' knowing they were different because of their physical difference (See Section 6.6.2) along with incidents where they refer to classmates from other ethnic backgrounds as trying to 'hide' their ethnicity by laying claim to one considered closer to the dominant Greek-Cypriot identity. These incidents demonstrate that the children are racialized and that race is a factor that they contend with at school. It is after all somewhat naïve of us to assume that within a highly monocultural society like Cyprus, a child who enters school with a physical difference from the majority of children would not be noticed as different

because rather than having Asian features, the child might have white blonde hair and blue eyes. The reality of Cyprus is that children partake in a highly ethnocentric, xenophobic and racist social structure and we should not be surprised when the rhetoric of the greater society permeates the school environment, resulting in the children being sentient to even small racial differences.

Asserting this claim for this group should not be taken as a direct comparison with the experiences of children from more traditional minority backgrounds whom, it has been established, often experience discrimination at school (Zembylas, 2010a & b; Panayiotopoulos and Nicolaidou, 2007; Angelides *et al.*, 2004; Trimikliniotis, 2004). Nonetheless difference is highly context specific so within a traditionally monocultural environment, such as Cypriot schools, even minor racial differences will be magnified and used to discriminate. Given this context we should not be blind to race as an element worth considering when we choose to explore the experiences of children at school no matter what their ethnic background.

#### 7.2.1.2.3 Issues from Beyond the School Gates: Diversity as demonized

Added to the complexity of their identities within schools is the authenticity that children are not isolated from the general rhetoric of the society and culture they are raised in, and as such they are socialized into the broader discourses surrounding difference and diversity within a particular context. This socialization will take place on many levels through the media they are exposed to, the messages they receive from parents and grandparents and of course from their peers and the school. Precisely because children are social actors negotiating within the general context of the society they do not simply discard these discourses at the school gates as they become part of their own rhetoric and belief systems. In the Cypriot context these discourses have been

characterized as highly ethnocentric and xenophobic (Zembylas, 2010b; Trimikliniotis, 2004; Section 2.4) illuminating a general negative image or embodiment of the ‘other’ (Spyrou, 2001). Children reflect these wider discourses of ethnicity, race, class and gender which they then apply to “majoritize” and “minoritize” other children within the school context (Zembylas, 2010, p 314). These categories are applied as a means of defining ‘in’ and ‘out’ groups, and of deciding who is included or excluded in a given situation. Consequently, the general negative discourses of the broader society will play a role in how children interact with each other, and particularly towards ‘others’ within the school environment.

For this group of bicultural children this broader societal negativity towards ‘others’ is made more complex as their hybridity affords them the ability to shift their group membership. Allowing them at times to belong to the dominant Greek-Cypriot class, and thereby immune to the effects of this negative rhetoric of the society, and at others to be positioned either by themselves or by others within the class of ‘other’, placing them beyond the safety of a Cypriot label. This movement between the relative safety of their ‘Cypriotness’ and the vulnerability associated with being ‘other’ is demonstrated in the reports of children where this ‘otherness’ is actively used against them during times of conflict in the form of negative name calling, or accusations that they are not Cypriot.

#### 7.2.1.2.4 Power as Shifting in the Children’s Identities at School

Undoubtedly the power issues surrounding how these bilingual children claim their Cypriotness, and how at other times they are stripped of this membership is complicated beyond that of a simplistic ‘us’ and ‘them’ dynamic. Unquestionably issues related to how ‘others’ are viewed within the society impact on the experiences of this group;

however, the power relationships involved here are not only top down. Rather issues of power and who holds power appear to be highly context specific and shifting. Zembylas contends:

Power relations are central to racist and nationalist practices and their negotiation, as these are enmeshed in day-to-day experiences at school; power operates to systematically define ways of being, and to mark out who is included and excluded (2010, p 325)

As a result the children are not confined within a static unidirectional power dynamic but rather are involved in the complex negotiation of their identity at school, which at times allows them great power while at other times they are excluded.

To this point we have seen that the children experience an extension of negative societal stereotypes and sentiments about immigrants and non-Cypriots. However, they are not static non-reactive victims of these attitudes experiencing only that which is imposed upon them in a nonresponsive manner. On the contrary, they are cognizant to the value attached to being English-speaking western mixed children who have unique contact with and knowledge of cultures and societies which in the context of a global popular or youth culture are desirable and valuable (Rampton, 2000).

Additionally the children often experience times where they wield power. They are for example called upon to be spokespersons when there are visitors from other countries, to use their language skills for school plays, to demonstrate the language during English lessons or to translate when there is a new child at school. All of these situations though tokenistic in a sense of linguistic integration are also times where the children exert power. As such the unique blend of the children's nationalities also affords them positions of power at times extending over and beyond their Cypriot peers. This may

also influence why, although they experience negativity and teasing in certain contexts, they do not report having as much difficulty as some of their non-western classmates.

Finally the positive aspects of being different the children experience may influence why despite the risks involved, they do not attempt to hide their other identity as they report some immigrant children doing (See Section 6.3.2.3 and 6.3.2.4). On the contrary, the children report pride in their hybridity (Byram, 2000). Influenced by their understanding of the value of their ‘mixed identity’, they are aware that it provides them unique access to media, pop culture and experiences beyond the local context: a globalized identity. Thus the children are active members in the third cultures of “generational identities” (Rampton, 2000).

#### 7.2.2 The Role of Difference Blindness in the Children’s Experiences of School

Though there appear to be incidents of racism in the children’s experiences of school, this does not mean there were not also elements of difference blindness. As explored in the discussion on Insights into Managing Language at School (Section 6.3.1), what the children report about their linguistic experience at school seems to be influenced by an expression of difference/linguistic – blindness particularly in terms of the lack of acknowledgement and recognition by teachers and the school to the language needs of this group. This blindness does not exert itself exclusively in language, but it can also be seen in what the children report about how they experience their ‘otherness’ at school.

In her study on the experience of immigrant children at primary school in Cyprus, Theodorou (2010) posited that difference blindness on the part of teachers and the school led to a justification of social exclusion and teasing experienced by immigrant children, along with attempts to minimize such incidents as anomalies to the general experience of immigrant children. She contends that this resulted in the identities and cultures of the children and their families being incorporated into the school community solely through the cultural tokenism of the three F's - food, festivals and fairs. These criticisms confirm the findings of Papamichael (2008), who also characterized the educational system as struggling with true integration of immigrant children. Papamichael explored the issues related to school policy on multiculturalism which she characterized as displaying a 'celebration of diversity' within schools, and thereafter concluded that there was a distinct failure on the part of the school system to address and challenge institutionalized racism, which she perceived as existing within the school.

Having established the school system as inherently monocultural and xenophobic, studies on primary school in Cyprus have focused on the responses of teachers to multiculturalism and diversity, or on the experience of immigrant or Turkish Cypriot children within the schools *vis-à-vis* their relationships and experiences with their Greek Cypriot peers. Studies specifically exploring the experiences of bilingual/bicultural children are limited (See Papapavlou, 2004). Consequently the exploration of school experiences beyond the opposing groups of Cypriot and Non-Cypriot/immigrant has to my knowledge not been explored. The children in this study are Cypriot. However as established, they still report incidents of teasing and bullying not dissimilar to those reported in the literature on immigrant or Turkish Cypriot children in local schools, leaving the question as to why this is the case with this particular group of children.



None of the children or their families reported any consistent effort to acknowledge, incorporate or even recognize the children's otherness within school except at the times when the school – teachers or principals – viewed that there was some value to be gained. Consequently difference blindness could be claimed to be at work with this group. However, this difference-blindness may in some ways be more damaging than it is for immigrant children. This is because for these bilingual children there is a permeating, persistent denial of their 'otherness' as it is ignored by teachers, the school and the system and substituted with an exclusively Greek – Cypriot identity. Indeed as the incident of Stella being reprimanded for introducing herself as American/Cypriot appears to reveal (See Section 6.3.2.3), the teacher sought to thrust Stella into the mono-dimensional/mono-cultural identity mould of 'being Cypriot'. A mould which Stella for whatever reason resisted at that time – she was not interested in claiming only her Cypriot identity but both her identities, 'her duality, her difference'. Certainly the children are Cypriot, they were born in Cyprus, have a Cypriot parent, and they also readily refer to themselves as Cypriot. However, 'they are not only Cypriot' and they should have the right to claim both their nationalities as and when they see fit, a lack of acknowledgement or in this case a direct negation of this claim is akin to discarding an entire part of the child.

What appears to be unfolding in the school context is that the children are participants in societal and educational systems which are heavily focused on "our heritage" as a heritage which is shared and unified, and which has resulted in a system characterized as highly ethnocentric and hellenocentric. Subsequently the difference blindness the school system and teachers extend to immigrant children permeates the school environment to such an extent that even children who enter education with a shared or dual identity, which encompasses more than being solely Greek-Cypriot, find it vital to shed or minimize their otherness for purposes of acceptance. Ultimately what is most highly valued and reified in Cypriot schools is not the multiculturalism espoused by the MoEC but the idealized citizen who is Greek-Cypriot and only the Greek- Cypriot.

### 7.3 Summary

This study set out to explore the experience of Greek English bilingual children in state elementary schools in Cyprus, with a particular focus on their experiences of language and identity at school. This chapter has discussed the results of the study, which have provided insight into the children's experiences and shown that the children may face issues of academic language abilities at school, that the school and teachers are generally nonresponsive to these possible needs and that in fact this group of children is completely overlooked by the MoEC's outdated restrictive definition of the bilingual child and the persistent focus on one type of bilingual speaker – the immigrant child. The chapter has discussed how the data establish that the children negotiate their language abilities at school where there is no clear role for their English language abilities beyond the ad hoc often culturally inappropriate approach of teachers and individual schools. Additionally the data discussed here present a complex picture of the identity experiences of this group of children who are aware of their differences from their peers, are subject to teasing and exclusion but who also demonstrate a significant resilience in the face of the challenges they experience at school. The chapter has drawn into discussion the role of difference blindness as a theory through which the experiences of this group of children can be additionally illuminated and concludes that the difference blindness this group experience is not limited to race but may also be linguistic in nature.

The following chapter examines the limitations of the study, the influence it may have on future research areas and expands on the discussion in this chapter by proposing recommendations and implications of these results for educational policy and practice in Cyprus regarding this group of children, focusing on what can be done to improve their school experiences in terms of language and identity.

## Chapter Eight: Conclusions and Recommendations

### 8.0 Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter draws the discussion of this study to conclusion by examining the implications of the results in terms of the experience of language and identity for this group of bilingual children in Cypriot schools. It also explores the consequences of these findings on educational policy and planning and delineates the influences of these conclusions while proposing additional areas of research to be explored in the future.

### 8.1 Aims and Limitations of the Study

The study set out to explore the experiences of language and identity for bilingual Greek-English speaking children in state elementary school in the Republic of Cyprus. As such the study constitutes the first of its kind on this under-researched, yet growing group of children in Cyprus. While small scale and preliminary and therefore not intended for generalizations or the creation of grand theories, the results of the study are meaningful in developing appreciation for the important experiences of these children in this particular context. Additionally, the findings may have bearing on the experiences of students and schools in other contexts undergoing similar challenges.

In applying a lens of language and identity to interpret the children's reporting, the findings illuminate the experiences of these children in several areas. First, the interview data generated from the study present new insight into how these bilingual children, enrolled in a monolingual school system, experience language at school in terms of domain specific use. This data is important as it indicates a need on the part of

teachers, schools and the MoEC to recognize all types of bilingual students within schools, not solely second language learners.

Second, there is meaningful data about the manner in which these children negotiate and construct their identities within the school context where the results have shown the children shift and move through their identities within the school context. These findings should encourage us to challenge current conceptualizations of difference and mixedness particularly as applied to children who do not fit the traditional image of the mixed black/white child. In challenging this conceptualization, the study advocates for social justice for a non-traditional minority group, and contests ideas about those who are deserving of social justice, not only in the local context of Cyprus but also in other similar contexts. Furthermore the findings of the study have implications for language policy and planning and definitions of multicultural education within Cypriot schools. Finally, the study's findings illuminate the methodological issues and concerns in conducting research with children and add to the limited literature of research on school experience which focuses on the voices of children rather than the interpretations of teachers, policy makers or administrators. Each of these areas is discussed in detail below.

## 8.2 Implications of the Findings

### 8.2.1 Implications for Bilingual Children and Language at School

The study's findings have provided insight into the language experiences of this group of bilingual children in Cyprus on several levels. First the data challenge the current common assumption that these simultaneous bilingual children necessarily enter school with Greek linguistic skills on par with their monolingual peers. This conclusion is achieved through an extrapolation from the literature on bilingualism (See Section 3.3), with particular relevance to more contemporary conceptualizations of bilingual

language use, along with the reportings from both the children and their families about difficulties in managing schoolwork. The data suggests there is evidence to support the idea that some of these children could need additional academic support with Greek. However this recommendation should not be used to support deficit theories of bilingualism such as semi-lingualism. On the contrary the recommendation is based on the acknowledgment that the manner and practices of language use for each child will differ and that bilingual children will ‘translanguage’ (Garcia, 2009) even while in a monolingual school environment.

An additional factor in the children’s experience of language and school success revealed by the findings of the study is the detrimental experience of language use at school fashioned in part by the continued limited definition of bilingual used by the MoEC. I would contend that paramount to addressing issues of language at school for this group of simultaneous bilingual children is the urgent need to redefine the bilingual student in the Cypriot context. Any new definition should be one which engages with understandings of bilingual language use as fluid, shifting and context specific and should extend beyond the concept of the immigrant Greek language learner. Such a redefinition should allow for individual language profiles of children to be created, and encourage all stakeholders – teachers, parents, the MoEC and the children - to actively engage with their languages and learning rather than simply applying formulaic holistic assumptions about how simultaneous bilingual children learn and use language and would better facilitate addressing the language needs of bilingual students within all Cypriot schools. Finally the adaptation of such an inclusive definition would facilitate bringing to the forefront issues of critical and inclusive education and social justice beyond those within the limited definition of multiculturalism currently used by the MoEC.

Secondly, akin to the findings of Panayiotopoulos and Nicolaidou (2007) and Theodorou, (2010), the lack of teacher accommodation or acknowledgement of the children's bilingualism reported in the findings added to the increasingly diverse population of Cyprus, indicate the need for Initial Teacher Training and Continual Professional Development courses dedicated to issues of bilingualism and the education of all types of bilingual students. Such courses need to go beyond the current approach focused on addressing the teaching of Greek as an additional language. I would contend that such courses engage with the literature on bilingualism in a more contemporary manner with emphasis placed on notions of "dynamic bilingualism" and "translanguage" (Garcia, 2009), understandings of Cummins (1991, 1979) "basic interpersonal communication skills" versus "cognitive-academic language proficiency" and the "macrointeraction of educational structures" (Cummins, 1995, p 197). Finally, the findings indicate that along with teachers, schools and the MoEC; bilingual families are also in need of education on the role of bilingualism in the language development of their children.

Furthermore the study's findings indicate a lack of policy on the part of the MoEC on the role of children's 'other' language in Cypriot primary schools. Based on the children's reporting there appears to be *ad hoc* unofficial use of the language, much of which could be characterized as culturally inappropriate (See also Papamichael, 2008). It would be prudent for the MoEC to explore critical multiculturalism and inclusive education which, as previously suggested in the Language Policy Profile (2004 – 2005), would work towards establishing greater understandings among teachers, school administrators and pupils of the importance of maintenance of their 'other' tongue and a dynamic bilingualism. For the Greek-English bilingual speakers in this study the newly employed techniques of CLIL (Content Language Integrated Learning) now being piloted in some primary schools in Cyprus may assist with this.

Lastly, beyond the specific context of Cyprus, it is my hope that the findings of this study may contribute towards a shift in how we view bilingual children; particularly as much of the international literature on bilingual children has focused on what I would consider a narrow definition of the bilingual child – that of the second language learner or immigrant child. I would contend that this has created a limited understanding of other expressions of bilingualism. This limited focus has resulted in much of the unique experiences and needs of many other types of bilingual children such as the simultaneous bilingual children in this study being overlooked in the literature and practice. It is my hope that the findings of this study will encourage further research into the experiences of this underrepresented but growing group of children in Cypriot schools and elsewhere.

#### 8.2.2 Implications for Identity Experiences of Bilingual Children at School

In the area of identity experience at school the study's findings indicate that identity at school is heavily regulated by the ethnocentric, nationalistic and xenophobic atmosphere of the school and the larger society where, although there is rhetoric on multiculturalism and acceptance, there are indications of a divide between 'in' and 'out' groups of Cypriots and non-Cypriots. I would argue that this divide is perhaps even more pervasive than previous research in Cyprus has indicated (Zembylas and Lesta, 2011; Zembylas 2010a & 2010b; Papamichael, 2008), as most other studies have explored relationships between groups with substantial external difference markers, for example, between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots or Greek Cypriots and immigrants. Within schools, difference markers such as manner of dress, religion, language, socioeconomic status and race among others have been used to explain incidents of exclusion and othering. That this group of children who do not display these overt difference markers in the same manner as previous studies have recorded, (sharing language, religion, cultural references and socioeconomic status with their

‘Cypriot peers’) still report incidents of teasing and non-acceptance suggests that the Cypriot society and school system may be even more racialized than previously thought, a suggestion which I would characterize as racism.

### 8.2.3 Implications for Conceptualizations of Mixed Children and Social Justice

In exploring the experiences of this group of children I would contend that the findings have illuminated important issues in how difference is defined. The children in the study all have two national identifications both of which are ‘western’. Nonetheless they report managing their identities at school so as to position themselves both ‘in’ and ‘out’ of groups. Important in this positioning is their self-identification with being ‘dual’ or ‘mixed’. The application of a definition of ‘mixed’ to these ‘white’ children challenges current conceptualizations of what it means to be a ‘mixed child’, a definition which, as suggested by Ali (2003) has traditionally been confined to a black/white binary.

Acknowledging these children as a distinct group is about recognizing them as eligible and deserving and should not be viewed as an attempt to downplay or overshadow the needs of traditional minority groups. Indeed recognizing groups such as these should encourage us to challenge outdated conceptualizations of mixedness which have been connected to racial groups primarily through notions of oppression. From my perspective social justice would demand that we do not allow such conceptualizations to overshadow the needs any group, simply because they do not ‘look like’ what we have come to understand as a minority. Ultimately difference and the manner in which it manifests itself will shift within different contexts. It is important that such shifts be understood as empowering to all minority groups alike.



Moreover, I would posit that extending the definition of ‘mixed’ to such groups is of particular relevance within Europe where open borders have increased migration and resulted in a growing number of marriages between European citizens from different national and/or ethnic backgrounds: unions which often involve considerable differences in culture, language, tradition and nationality but are not definitively seen as ‘mixed marriages’. Expanding our understanding of difference beyond one which only applies to the black/white binary or to traditionally oppressed groups is important if we are sincere in our efforts to work towards a post-race society.

#### 8.2.4 Implications for Educational Policy in Cyprus

One of the most important contributions from the findings of this study is the light they sheds on the experiences of this group of children in Cypriot schools. This is particularly timely as Cypriot education has entered a period of reform over the last several years (Policy Report of the Ministry of Education for Multicultural Education, 2008). In theory the new reforms and focus of the MoEC do much to address the disparities experienced by immigrant children. For example, new changes to be implemented include the following:

“Parallel classes for fast acquisition of the Greek language through intensive instruction.

In-service training for teachers teaching Greek as a second or/and a foreign language organised by the Pedagogical Institute.

Preparation of a test that will be used by all schools, in order to rank and classify pupils to the appropriate level by the Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation.

Preparation of an induction guide for the new coming foreign pupils which is translated in eight languages, with basic information for the pupils and the

parents about the educational system of Cyprus. The languages are: English, Turkish, Russian, Georgian, Bulgarian, Rumanian, Ukrainian and Arabic.

Addition of intercultural elements to the new Curriculum and the school textbooks that will be prepared within the framework of the changes on the structure and the content of education.”

(Ministry of Education and Culture, Annual Report 2010, p 36)

However although these recommendations constitute an important shift in policy for the MoEC in how it addresses the needs of immigrant children, they unfortunately continue to focus efforts their efforts on the assimilation of non-Cypriot or traditional minority children through the teaching and learning of Greek. As such they fail to acknowledge even the existence of this distinct group of bilingual children in Cypriot schools. As Cyprus is experiencing increasing numbers of children from mixed marriages, many of whom will also be bilingual, unless the MoEC redefines bilinguals and its policy on multiculturalism, these children will continue to enter a school system which neither accommodates nor acknowledges their unique learning needs.

An additional area where the study's findings have provided important insight is in what it has contributed in terms of understanding of school experience from the perspective of the children rather than the interpretations of teachers, policy makers or administrators. As Thiesen (2007) contends that most studies of schools fail to address the experiences of pupils from their own perspectives and although there were certainly challenges in capturing these experiences, as discussed further on in this chapter, the study is valuable in drawing attention to the need to incorporate students' voices and experiences in research on schools.

### 8.3 Influences on the Research and Findings

It is important to explore some of the overriding influences which have shaped and moulded the research. Foremost of these is my own position as researcher. As explained in Chapter Four, I entered this research process with a strong personal motivation to explore the experiences of this group of children within my context and this certainly has influenced the scope and focus of the research. In concluding the study I found that the results challenged my own conceptualizations of the experiences of this group in several ways.

The first of these was the insight that conducting the study gave me into the worlds of children. I had hoped to carry out a participatory research project but ultimately avoided applying this label, as I experienced considerable challenges in implementing this methodology. I felt the project, though initially influenced and conceptualized as participatory, missed the mark principally in terms of the involvement of the children in the decision-making processes. This was due to a variety of factors and circumstances such as that the fact the children did not all attend the same school, did not meet as a group and were not easy to schedule interviews with. All of these factors influenced my attempts to provide a voice for the children. Perhaps due to my own inexperience or naivety in conducting research with children, I had anticipated that achieving their active involvement in the research would have been easier to accomplish. Ultimately it proved one of the most challenging aspects of the project. Given all of these difficulties it is still my hope that the results achieved here contribute to the limited literature which gives voice to the experiences of children in school.

An additional area where my preconceptions were challenged by the findings was in how comfortably the children reported on managing their dualities of language and identity in the school. They appeared to understand the embodiment of mixedness in a highly complex and nuanced manner and comfortably recounted both positive and negative experiences of this. None of the children expressed a struggle over being mixed, even though they recounted occasions when they were ‘exposed’ because of their duality. Nonetheless such occasions did not cause them to reject this duality. I was continually struck by their resilience and ability to rationalize and recover from what I considered some quite distressing experiences of teasing and racism at school.

Additionally the children reported being extremely aware of the global value of their bilingualism and biculturalism and the value they attached to this appeared to outweigh any difficulties they experienced. Finally, and perhaps as a consequence of this resilience, I was surprised by how much advocacy the parents and children asserted for the state school system. Regardless of struggles or concerns they had had, they stressed that they would happily engage with the public school sector again and encourage other families to do the same. Overall the experience of interacting with the children and families was transformative for me on many levels, particularly as this interaction is beyond my direct work environment, and it resulted in sparking my interest in pursuing several other research projects connected to this group, a few of which I discuss in the next section

## 8.4 Further Research

In terms of further research first and foremost I would like to explore in full detail the interview data I collected from the parents in this study. As I explained in the Data Analysis Chapter (Section 6.2) this data was not fully incorporated within this particular study as I wanted to remain as focused as possible on the reporting of the children. The

interview data from the parental interviews are rich and insightful and I look forward to having the opportunity to explore and analyse them further. I believe this data also has much to contribute towards influencing educational policy in Cyprus.

Additionally I would like to conduct a study similar to this one on a group of children enrolled in private primary schools in Cyprus. This would provide a fascinating contrast to this study as there is a linguistic shift as such schools are English language medium schools, which although regulated through the MoEC follow the British National Curriculum and have significantly different pupil populations, often with many expatriate children enrolled. To date there is little to no research on children in private primary schools in Cyprus. I believe such a study would be illuminating in terms of the experiences of language and identity of the children but would also be important in what it might also reveal about the state schools system by comparison and contrast. Additionally, I would like to return to the state elementary system to conduct a longitudinal study with a small group of bilingual children entering school, so as to track their experiences over several years. Finally the study has also piqued my interest in issues related specifically to female migrants within Cyprus and I am interested in conducting further interviews with long term female migrants to explore their integration within Cypriot society.

## 8.5 Conclusion

Recognizing the limitations of a small scale exploratory study, the research described within these pages has, I believe, provided the starting point for a discussion on the educational experiences of a deserving and growing group of children enrolled in state elementary schools in Cyprus. It is hoped that the insight provided by the findings here will encourage researchers, administrators and practitioners to further explore the

educational, language and identity experiences of this group of children and as such adapt and adjust approaches to the teaching and integration of this particular group by addressing their specific educational needs within developing policy and planning.

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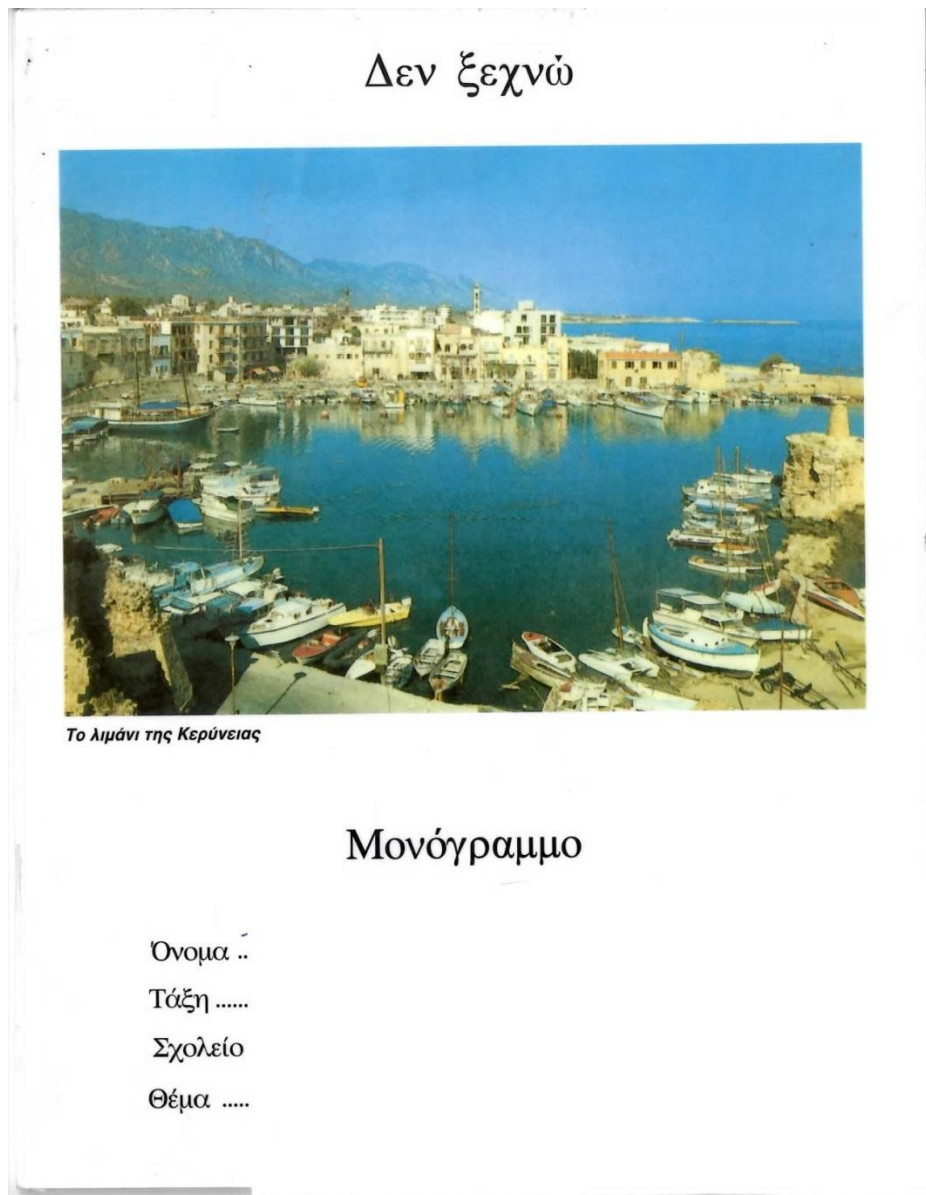
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## Appendix 1: Copies of Artifacts collected from Primary Schools

### Exercise Book Cover used in State Elementary Schools

Text reads: "I don't forget"



Copy of script for play where children as English soldiers speak broken English and Greek

**ΤΙΜΗ ΣΤΟΝ ΗΡΩΑ ΚΑΙ ΠΟΙΗΤΗ ΕΥΑΓΟΡΑ ΠΑΛΛΗΚΑΡΙΔΗ**

ΑΦΗΓΗΤΗΣ 1: Στις 18 Δεκεμβρίου 1956 ο Ευαγόρας Παλληκαρίδης συλλαμβάνεται από τους Άγγλους μεταφέροντας όπλο. Σύμφωνα με τον αγγλικό νόμο Έκτακτης Ανάγκης, η μεταφορά όπλου σήμαινε θάνατο με απαγχονισμό. Μάταια οι δάσκαλοι και οι συμμαθητές του τον περιμένουν να κτυπήσει την πόρτα και να μπει στην τάξη.

**(Α΄ ΣΚΗΝΗ: ΣΤΗΝ ΤΑΞΗ)**

Οι 10 μαθητές στέκονται σε ημικύκλιο με άνοιγμα προς τους θεατές – μια καρέκλα μόνο για τον Ευαγόρα με το γράμμα επάνω)

ΚΑΘΗΓΗΤΗΣ: Όλοι παρόντες; (ο καθηγητής στέκει στη μέση του ημικυκλίου)

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ 1: Κύριε, ο Ευαγόρας λείπει (και δείχνει την άδεια θέση).

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ 2: Δεν ήρθε ούτε σήμερα σχολείο.

ΚΑΘΗΓΗΤΗΣ: Ξέρεις κανέναν που βρίσκεται; Ξαν πολύ να το παράκανε αυτές τις μέρες.

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ 3: Κύριε, μου φαίνεται πως κάτι βλέπω στο θρανίο του.

(Πλησιάζει και παίρνει το γράμμα)

Τα γράμματα είναι του Ευαγόρα. Τα ξεχωρίζω! Ελάτε, κύριε...

(Δίνει το γράμμα στον καθηγητή)

ΚΑΘΗΓΗΤΗΣ: Έχεις δίκαιο! (Διαβάζει λίγο σιωπηλός το γράμμα και μελαγχολεί...)

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ 4: Κύριε, τι συμβαίνει; Γιατί αλλάξατε ύφος;

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ 5: Έπαθε κάτι ο Ευαγόρας;

ΚΑΘΗΓΗΤΗΣ: Διαβάστε και θα καταλάβετε! (δίνει το γράμμα σε ένα μαθητή)

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ 6 :

«Παλιοί συμμαθητές,

Αυτή την ώρα κάποιος λείπει ανάμεσά σας.

Κάποιος που φεύγει αναζητώντας λίγο ελεύθερο αέρα...»

(Δίνει το γράμμα στο διπλανό μαθητή και ούτω κάθεξής)

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ 7:

« Κάποιος που μπορεί να μην τον ξαναδείτε παρά μόνο νεκρό...»

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ 8:

«Μην κλάψετε στον τάφο του. Δεν κάνει να τον κλαίτε.

Λίγα λουλούδια του Μαγίου σκορπάτε του στον τάφο. Του φτάνει αυτό μονάχα.»

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ 9:

« Γεια σας, παλιοί συμμαθητές.

①

Τα τελευταία λόγια τα γράφω σήμερα για σας.  
ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ 10:  
Κι όποιος θελήσει για να βρει ένα χαμένο αδελφό, έναν παλιό του φίλο...»  
(ενώ μιλά ο μαθητής 10 μαζεύονται σιγά-σιγά γύρω του οι υπόλοιποι)

ΟΛΟΙ ΜΑΖΙ  
«...ας πάρει μίαν ανηφοριά, ας πάρει μονοπάτια  
Να βρει τα σκαλοπάτια που παν στη λευτεριά  
Με την ελευθεριά μαζί μπορεί να βρει κι εμένα.  
Αν ζω θα μ' έβρει εκεί.»

(Τραγουδούν όλοι μαζί χαμηλόφωνα 2-3 στροφές από το τραγούδι 'Θα πάρω  
μιαν ανηφοριά' ενώ αποχωρούν από τα παρασκήνια)

Ακούγεται το τραγούδι «Θα πάρω μια ανηφοριά»

#### (Β' ΣΚΗΝΗ: ΣΤΗΝ ΑΙΘΟΥΣΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΙΚΑΣΤΗΡΙΟΥ)

ΑΦΗΓΗΤΗΣ 2: Στις 25 Φεβρουαρίου 1957 ο Ευαγόρας Παλληκαρίδης, μετά από φρικτά βασανιστήρια, οδηγήθηκε στο δικαστήριο. Μάταια ο δικηγόρος του τον συμβουλεύει να μην παραδεχτεί την κατηγορία. Όλοι μένουν κατάπληκτοι μπροστά στον ενθουσιασμό και τη λεβεντιά του 18χρονου νέου. Αντιμετώπισε παλικαρία τον Άγγλο δικαστή κι αγέρωχος δέχτηκε τη θανατική καταδίκη ως γνήσιος πατριώτης.

(Δύο Άγγλοι στρατιώτες φέρνουν σπρώχνοντας τον Ευαγόρα Παλληκαρίδη)

ΑΓΓΛΟΙ ΣΤΡΑΤΙΩΤΕΣ : - Go go tromokrati!  
- Come on paliopaido! Move! The judge is waiting!  
- Me tipota den glitoneis apo edw. Twra esu tha deis!  
You dead now

(Μπροστά στο δικαστή)  
- This is Evagoras Pallikaridis!  
- We arrested him last night.  
- He is very dangerous!

ΔΙΚΑΣΤΗΣ: Πώς ονομάζεσαι;

ΕΠ: Ευαγόρας Παλληκαρίδης

Δ: Ετών;

ΕΠ: Δεκαοχτώ.

Δ: Από πού κατάγεσαι;

ΕΠ: Από την Τσάδα της Πάφου.



Δ: Ευαγόρα Παλληκαρίδη, κατηγορείσαι για επιθέσεις εναντίον των Άγγλων. Λένε ότι είσαι τρομοκράτης.

ΕΠ: Όχι, τρομοκράτης, κύριε δικαστά, αλλά αγωνιστής για τη λευτεριά της πατρίδας μου.

Δ: Μη διακόπτεις, κατηγορούμενε!  
Είσαι ένας criminal, ένας ένας δολοφόνος αθώων ανθρώπων.

ΕΠ: Δεν είναι δολοφόνοι όσοι αγωνίζονται για την πατρίδα τους!

Δ: Κατηγορείσαι ακόμα ότι έστηνες ενέδρες και σκότωνες άντρες του αγγλικού στρατού. Έχουμε μαρτυρίες ότι στην Πάφο χτυπούσες αλύπητα τους στρατιώτες μας που ήθελαν να επιβάλουν την τάξη.

ΕΠ: Ψέματα, όλα ψέματα!

Δ: Κατηγορούμενε, παραδέξου!

ΕΠ: Παραδέχομαι ότι είμαι ένας αγωνιστής!

Δ: Ένας εγκληματίας

ΕΠ: Αγωνιστής αγνός και τίμιος!

Δ: Τρομοκράτης, αλήτης, ληστής, δολοφόνος!

ΕΠ: Τιμή μου ν' αγωνίζομαι για τη λευτεριά της πατρίδας μου! ✕

Δ: Όστε το παραδέχεσαι λοιπόν! Ξέρεις ποια τιμωρία σε περιμένει;

ΕΠ: Ξέρω ότι το δικαστήριο θα με καταδικάσει σε θάνατο. Δε μετανιώνω όμως για ό,τι έκαμα. Και θα το ξανάκαμνα πάλι αν το ζητούσε η πατρίδα μου.

Δ: Δηλαδή παραδέχεσαι;

ΕΠ: Μάλιστα κ. Δικαστά. Και είμαι περήφανος γιατί ως Έλληνας Κύπριος έκαμα το καθήκον μου.

ΣΥΝΗΓΟΡΟΣ: Εντιμότητα κύριε δικαστά, το όπλο που βρέθηκε πάνω στον Ευαγόρα Παλληκαρίδη το βράδυ της 18ης Δεκεμβρίου του περασμένου έτους ήταν καλυμμένο με γράσο και δεν μπορούσε να χρησιμοποιηθεί. Ένα παλιοντούφεκο ήταν! Ζητώ την επιείκεια του δικαστηρίου σας για τον αυθορμητισμό του πελάτη μου. Βλέπετε ο νεανικός ενθουσιασμός φταίει για όλα!

Δ: Λυπάμαι κύριε συνήγορε, αλλά ο νόμος είναι νόμος. Κατηγορούμενε έχεις να πεις τίποτα προτού σου επιβληθεί η ποινή;

ΕΠ: Κύριε δικαστά, γνωρίζω ότι θα με στείλετε στην αγχόνη! Ναι! Μετέφερα πυροβόλο όπλο γιατί είμαι αγωνιστής της Ε.Ο.Κ.Α και ορκίστηκα να πολεμήσω για την ελευθερία της πατρίδας μου.

3

Δ: Ευγόρα Παλληκαρίδη, παραδέχτηκες ότι είσαι ένοχος με την κατηγορία ότι μετέφερες οπλισμό αντίθετα με το νόμο. Ο νόμος προνοεί μόνο μια καταδίκη και αυτή είναι ο θάνατος με απαγχονισμό.

ΣΥΝΗΓΟΡΟΣ: Όχι, δεν είναι δυνατόν! Είναι πολύ νέος για να πεθάνει! Σας παρακαλώ, κύριε δικαστά, δείξτε επιείκεια!

Δ: Πάρτε τον για απαγχονισμό!

ΕΠ: Σ' ευχαριστώ κύριε δικαστά! Πρέπει στ' αλήθεια να σε ευγνωμονώ γιατί τώρα με κάνεις αθάνατο! Δε με φοβίζει ο θάνατος γιατί ζωή χωρίς ελευθερία δεν αξίζει.

Δ: Πάρτε τον απ' εδώ! Now!

ΑΓΓΛΟΙ ΣΤΡΑΤΙΩΤΕΣ: Come on paliotomaro!  
Tromokrati!  
Proxwra!

(Τον σπρώχνουν οι στρατιώτες και αποχωρούν όλοι απ' τη σκηνή)  
Ακούγεται μουσική-τραγούδι

### (ΣΚΗΝΗ 3:ΚΑΙ ΠΑΛΙ ΣΤΗΝ ΤΑΞΗ)

Μπαίνουν σιωπηλοί οι μαθητές. Απλώνουν στο θρανίο του Ευαγόρα την ελληνική σημαία, και τοποθετούν από ένα λουλούδι. Παίρνουν θέσεις και απαγγέλουν το ποίημα «Εψές πουρνό μεσάνυχτα...».

ΑΦΗΓΗΤΗΣ 1: Ο επίλογος γράφτηκε στα Φυλακισμένα Μνήματα. Ο έφηβος ποιητής οδηγήθηκε στην αγχόνη ακολουθώντας άλλους οχτώ λεβεντονιούς κι έχοντας τον Εθνικό Ύμνο στα χείλη.

University of Cyprus Prospectus 2011 – Courses offering bilingual education training or teaching of Greek as a Second Language.

language in the early elementary grades. Teaching language arts to emerging readers means integrating the skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. The course aims to help students comprehend literacy as a developing structure and develop a reflective and well-informed philosophy about the teaching of literacy. Several theories regarding the nature of literacy are analyzed and various instructional strategies to facilitate literacy learning for emergent, novice and transitional readers and writers are proposed.

### **EDU 222 Language Arts Methods (5 ECTS)**

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The course aims to provide future educators with the theoretical and methodological tools to successfully teach Greek as a first language (reading, writing, discussing). The course examines various literacy teaching methods such as traditional grammar/skills-based approaches, text-based approaches, the new communicative approach, as well as the approaches of the reader's workshop and the writing workshop. In addition, sociolinguistic concepts such as diglossia, language and dialect are examined and the functional use of the Greek Cypriot dialect in the Greek Cypriot classroom is considered. Finally, the course addresses issues of assessment and teaching students whose first language is not Greek.

### **EDU 224 Forms of Language Expression (5 ECTS)**

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Creative use of language. Improvisation in language expression through: description, interpretation, story making, poems, songs, dialogue, puppet-show and drama. Aim and educational value of story-telling. Theories about the origin of tales. The symbolic language in tales. Criteria for the selection of tales and ways of presentation. The puppet-show as a mean of education and entertainment of the pre-school child. Puppet-show by children for children. Illustrations as a means for language development and communication. Poetry in nursery school: aim, pedagogical value and ways of approaching children's poetry at a nursery school.

## **EDU 425 Teaching Greek as a Second Language**

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This course focuses on issues arising from the teaching of Greek as a second language. In particular, it examines the concept of bilingualism from the scope of theoretical linguistics and sociolinguistics, focusing on the difference between the terms acquisition and learning and the wider framework of second language acquisition and teaching. Additionally, a review is carried out of the relevant pedagogical research conducted in Greece, Cyprus and other countries on the teaching of Greek as a second language, examining at the same time the proposed pedagogical models. Finally, the issue of intercultural education is also studied, interwoven in the wider efforts for successfully implementing bilingual and multilingual students in education.

## **EDU 426 Teaching Children's Literature**

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## Appendix 2: The Pilot Study Consent Forms and Letters

### 2.0 Sample Letters and Consent Forms for Pilot Study

Dear XXXXXXXX,

Thank you for considering allowing XXXXXXXX to participate in this focus group for my doctorate.

Attached please find the informed consent form which you will need to read and explain to XXXXXXXX . If you **both** agree to participate in the focus group please bring the signed form with you on Saturday. If you should have a change of mind about participating please just let me know before Saturday by calling me on my mobile: **99499568**.

The final date and time for the focus group is **Saturday, September 22, 2007 at 9 a.m. at the Coffee Beanery in Nicosia the process should take one hour.**

Should you or XXXXXXXX have any questions regarding the study please do not hesitate to contact me either before or after Saturday on 99499568 or at [fincham.k@intercollege.ac.cy](mailto:fincham.k@intercollege.ac.cy).

Thanks again,

Katherine Fincham-Louis  
Lecturer  
Languages Department

## 2.1 Consent Form Distributed for Pilot Study

### **Informed consent form for pilot study (focus group) for Katherine Fincham-Louis Doctorate in Education Candidate at the University of Edinburgh.**

**Individual consent form for** \_\_\_\_\_

**Principal Investigator:** Katherine Fincham – Louis  
Doctorate in Education Candidate at the University of Edinburgh.

**Both you and your child will sign and retain a copy of the consent certificate provided you both agree to participate in the study.**

I am Katherine Fincham – Louis a doctoral candidate at the University of Edinburgh. I am at the stage of beginning my thesis and am interested in the experiences of bilingual/bicultural children in Cypriot elementary schools. I believe that this group of children is one which has yet to be addressed by either policy or research in Cyprus and I am interested in exploring from the child's perspective what it means to be a bilingual/bicultural child in a monolingual school system in Cyprus.

In order to conduct this research I need to talk directly to children about their experiences. I will need to talk to both boys and girls in B Kyklos about their experiences of being bilingual/bicultural at school.

Once you have learnt more about the study and provided you agree that your son or daughter may participate, I will then independently ask your child if I have their agreement as well. This is important as it is crucial that the children do not feel pressured into participation. Both of you have to agree independently before I can begin.

#### **The Purpose:**

The purpose of the focus group in which your child will participate, should you both agree to do so, is to 'brainstorm' ways which the children feel would work best for them to express their experiences of being bilingual/bicultural. This means that rather than directly exploring their experiences at school this group will focus on the methods which could be used to explore these experiences with other children. *It is important for you and your child to understand that during this process your child may voluntarily share their own experiences of being bilingual/bicultural.*

#### **Type of Research:**

A focus group consisting of four children all of whom are Greek/English speakers and in B Kyklos at public primary school.

**Selection of Participants:**

I am interested in talking to Greek/English children all of whom are in B Kyklos as this means they have had at least three years of primary education. I have also tried to 'match' the children with a friend so that they would feel more comfortable during the focus group. In each case I have asked your son or daughter along with a bilingual/bicultural friend of theirs to participate.

**Voluntary Participation:**

You are welcome to ask me as many questions as you want about the purpose and content of my research and to take as much time as you need to decide on the participation of your child.

**Protocol:**

Your son or daughter will take place in a small focus group of two boys and two girls all between the ages 9 – 11. This focus group will be moderated by me and will last approximately one hour. It will take place on **Saturday, September 22 at 9 a.m. at The Coffee Beanery in Nicosia.**

*Parents are welcome to stay and enjoy a coffee but would not be able to sit in close proximity to the group.*

The group discussion will start with me and introductions of the children in order to make them more comfortable. As I am striving to involve the children as much as possible I will then talk to them about the general research question, what does it mean to be a bilingual/bicultural child in the public school system in Cyprus, and I will then ask them how they would like to run the session. We will also work to assign roles to each member of the group; I will share some ideas about research methods with the group and ask them what they think about these methods. Do they feel they would be effective or not? I will ask the children to think together about any methods which they feel might be fun and effective to explore the research question. I will ask the children to assign themselves their own alias by which they would like to be called in the write up.

The entire discussion will be recorded by me and the recording will be kept confidentially by me. Children will not be named on the tape but will instead be identified by their alias. The results of the focus group will be 'written up' by me as a method paper to be used for an assignment towards my doctorate and ultimately may be used within the methods chapter of the dissertation itself.

*There is a slight risk that your son/daughter may share some personal or confidential information by chance or that he/she may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. However, I do not wish this to happen, and he/she may refuse to answer any question or not take part in a portion of the discussion/interview/questionnaire if he/she*

*feels the question(s) are too personal or if talking about them makes him/her uncomfortable.*

**Benefit:**

There will be no immediate benefit to your child or you but your child's participation will help me in establishing ways in which to explore this topic with other children at a later date.

**Confidentiality:**

I will not be sharing information about your son or daughter outside of the research team. The information that I collect from this research project will be kept confidential. Information about your child that will be collected from the research will be put away and no-one but the researcher will be able to see it.

**Sharing of Findings:**

At the end of the study, I will be sharing what I have learnt with the participants so as to check that I have interpreted their input correctly. I may also publish the results in order that other interested people may learn from this research.

**Right to Refusal:**

You may choose not to have your child participate in this study and your child does not have to take part in this research if she/he does not wish to do so. Your child may stop participating in the discussion/interview at any time that you or she/he wish.

**Contact Information:**

If you have any questions you may ask them now or later, even after the study has started. If you wish to ask questions later, you may contact me at **99499568** or by email at [fincham.k@intercollege.ac.cy](mailto:fincham.k@intercollege.ac.cy)

I have read the foregoing information. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily for my child to participate as a participant in this study and understand that I have the right to withdraw her/him from the study at any time.

Print Name of Parent or Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent of Guardian\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Child \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I have accurately read or witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the



parent/guardian of the potential participant and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

Print name of researcher \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of researcher \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Day/month/year

A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been provided to the parent or guardian of the participant \_\_\_\_\_ (initialed by researcher/assistant)

## Appendix 3: The Pilot Study Data

### 3.0 Rationale for Conducting the Group Interview/Focus Group

I made the decision to conduct a focus group as a means of exploring method choice with the children prior to beginning the main study. The decision to use focus group was taken for several reasons. Firstly, focus groups have previously been used successfully with children (Hennessy & Heary, 2005; Morgan *et al.*, 2002; Barbour. & Kitzinger, 1999). Additionally, as Mauthner (1997) posits focus groups may hold a special advantage for research with children as they help to redress the inherent power conflict between adult researcher and child participant. This she contends is due to several factors, the structure of the group where the number of children is greater than that of adults, the use of informal means of address, seating arrangements which are relatively non-hierarchy such as at a round table which combine to minimize the view of the adult moderator as in control or holding power in the group. For Wilkenson (1999) the advantage of the focus group's relatively non-hierarchical approach to the collection of data fits well with a feminist concern for a diffusion of power and control within the research process. This is a concern often shared by researchers working with children where issues of power and control, viewed as inherent in the adult child relationships, need to be addressed within methodological choices (Mayall 1994; Mauthner, 1997). One of the main advantages of the use of focus groups is as Hennessy and Heary, (2005) recognize is that the focus group acknowledges to children their own expertise within a particular area. As a result participants in focus groups often feel more relaxed, comfortable and in control and as such focus groups are viewed to be appropriate for use in research with children.

### 3.1 Accommodations to using focus groups with children

There are however; several accommodations which are necessary when using focus groups with children. These are outlined by Hennessy and Heary, (*op cit*) with perhaps the most relevant being the importance of homogeneity in the group. Morgan (1997), Wengraf (2001) and Barbour and Kitzinger (1999) support the importance of shared characteristics in the selection of participants for focus groups, as they assert that it is commonality which is relied on for participants to feel comfortable in expressing and sharing experiences with the group. Indeed, Barbour and Kitzinger refer to “topic specific sampling” (*op cit.*, p 8) where participants are selected on the basis of topic. As a response to these concerns all the children who participated in the focus group shared the common characteristic of being bilingual/bicultural English/Greek speakers who attended state elementary school in Cyprus. Though my intention had been to conduct a focus group due to limited self-directed discussion amongst the participants I would classify the pilot as more of a group interview than a focus group.

### 3.2 Group Composition

Only English/Greek speakers who attended state elementary school and were in the B Kykklos (upper school - grades four through six) were included in the group as this was a parameter of the forthcoming study. In addition, children were included in friendship pairs where each child was asked to bring a friend. Lewis establishes that friendship grouping can be important for children’s comfort and participation in focus groups (Lewis, 1992, p 418), while Morgan identifies the importance of participants feeling comfortable to speak to each other as paramount to the success of the group (1998, p 37). The result was the group was composed of four children: two eleven years old girls who were ‘best friends’, and a nine and eleven year old boy who had known each other since early childhood. While the agreement can be made that the group composition

was smaller than recommended, I applied the rationale of Morgan (1997) who contends that smaller groups are easier to moderate and offer more chance of participation of group members.

### 3.2.1 Gender

Hennessy et al (2005) found that single sex focus groups were best with topics where there was some sensitivity. Likewise, Pattman and Kehily (2004) recounted how boys can express ‘horror’ at the idea of being interviewed with girls when there is a sensitive topic to be discussed, conceding that mixed gender interview groups may redress some of the societal constraints experienced by girls (*op cit.*, p 140). However as this was a preliminary study to solicit opinions about method, and not related to a sensitive gender specific issue, both sexes were included in the group formation. This accounted for the possibility that there would emerge clear gender distinctions on method choice, something which ultimately did not materialize.

### 3.3 Ethics

Eventually, the most complex issues to be addressed were those related to ethics. As Hill (2007) outlines the basic ethical considerations relating to conducting any research are compounded in the case of children, and as a result it was important that as much as possible was done to address ethical issues. As a result, the following procedure was followed; the children were contacted through their parents who had the context and nature of the study explained to them. Parents were then asked to inquire if the children would be interested in participating. It was emphasized to the parents that they should refrain from coercing their children to participate so as to ensure participation was voluntary. As a result there was one child who after initial contact declined to be included in the group and had to be replaced. Once verbal confirmation of the children’s

willingness to participate was received, cover letters and consent forms were delivered to all parents. These outlined the purpose and use of the study, explained the significance of the children's voluntary participation, clarified the anonymity of participants, and made clear the protection of the data (At the end of this Appendix section). Parents were asked to read and discuss the consent form with their child and both child and parent were asked to sign the consent with the child's signature being symbolic of his or her willingness to participate. It was of paramount importance that every child understood the procedure and purpose of the study (Hennessy *et al.*, 2005) before he or she agreed to participate.

Fundamental to legal ethical issues were the moral issues of researching with children. Particular attention was given to diminishing the inherent power dynamic between adult and child (Robinson and Kellett, 2004). Attention was paid to several issues: the location of the interview, the use of language within the focus group process, and the structure of the questions which were used to stimulate discussion. Firstly, considerable attention was taken to identify a location which would serve to minimize the inherent power relationships between researcher and children. As all four children did not attend the same school it would have been complicated to use a school location and additionally as Kellett and Ding (2004) illuminate "School locations require researchers to negotiate multiple layers of gate keeping, work around the limitations of timetables and accommodate the agendas of senior managers" (*op cit.*, p 170). The decision was made to conduct the focus group at a cafe as a neutral locale.

Furthermore, first names were used to introduce all members including the moderator and observer, and seating was at a round table where all participants and the researcher could be viewed equally within the group so as to diminish inherent power dynamics (Morgan *et al.*, 2002). The moderation of the group was semi-structured with a series of four to five main topics each with specific probes identified for discussion ahead of

time, in an attempt to achieve a funneling affect (Morgan, 1997, p 15). Questions were as “loosely phrased” (*op cit.*, p 47) as possible so as to avoid clear yes or no responses and to allow for the probing of more interesting areas and the freedom to skip through areas which may not have generated particular interest.

### 3.4 Limitations

While acknowledging the strengths of focus groups, it is equally important to acknowledge their limitations. As Punch expounds children are generally not used to being taken seriously by adults (Punch, 2002, p 325), consequently one must consider how comfortable children involved within a focus group will be openly expressing their opinions and the affect this may have had on their responses. This sentiment may be even more significant within Cypriot society where it is particularly unusual for children to be consulted in this manner. Added to this is the caution of Hennessy and Heary (2005) that focus groups with children, as opposed to individual interviews, can result in a sense of group think where some children’s answers are influenced by those provided by the more dominant members of the group in an effort to fit in. Additionally, as Stafford et al, state using groups to consult with young people means that some people are ‘left out’ and as a result one has to be aware of the limited voices being accessed through the group (2003, p 366). Perhaps the most difficult issue related to the use of focus group is that of the role and experience of the moderator. Vaughn et al, (1996) highlight the importance of the moderator’s skills in conducting a successful focus group and emphasize the difficulty in accomplishing this effectively. They assert that because to the nature of focus groups there is a belief that anyone can do it; however, for the focus group to be successfully conducted they stress that moderators need to be well trained and experienced in the dynamics of group interaction (*op cit.*, p 148). This is of particular importance in focus groups as success is based on the facilitation of participants not simply replying to questions asked, but actually conversing among themselves on the topic. In a review of over forty studies using focus

group Kitzinger (1994) could not identify a single one which concentrated on the conversation between participants, and there were very few that included any quotations from more than one participant at a time (*op cit.*, p 104). As a result he identified a lack of group interaction as a common weakness in focus group research. Morgan (1997) and Barbour and Kitzinger (1999) while recognizing that focus groups are extremely difficult to facilitate view the interaction of the group as a main characteristic and definitive to the focus group interview.

In my own case though there was conversation between participants, the momentum of conversation was maintained largely through stimulus from the moderator. With the result that though the objective was to conduct a focus group, the lack of free interaction between the group members during the discussion requires that I acknowledge the focus group would not meet the criteria established by Morgan (*op cit.*) or Barbour and Kitzinger (*op cit.*). Ultimately, using their definition it would be better characterized as a group interview rather than a focus group.

### 3.5 Analysis

A digital recording of the focus group was made and later transcribed. In an effort to safeguard the data two digital records were stored and the transcript was produced in hard copy. In transcribing the recording Rubin & Rubin's advice of, "You put in the transcript only the level of detail we are likely to analyze and include any information that might influence the interpretation, such as laughter or gestures of emphasis or puzzlement." (2005, p 204) was applied; whilst reference was made to Silverman's Simplified Transcription Symbols Table (Wengraf, 2001, p 216) as a means of standardizing the transcript as much as possible. Furthermore, where significant pauses along with their length were noted as it was felt that these silences in a document, so often overlooked, could hold considerable importance. Additionally, a non-

participating friend attended the focus group and recorded observations on group interaction as the discussion took place

As the pilot study's focus was preliminary and exploratory and did not aspire to the building of grand theories on methodology with children, investigating the use of pre-existing methods often used in research with children was deemed appropriate. Initial analysis of the data searched for expressions of preference toward method on the part of the children. The category of receptiveness was applied and definitions were created in terms of 'would enjoy', 'wouldn't enjoy' or 'indifferent'. Once the interview data had been broken down into these initial categories further exploration of the data refined these definitions and the categories of 'feeling free' (from any pressure to perform or be evaluated in the task), things being 'hard', 'like school work', 'boring' and 'childish' and the midrange of 'I don't know' representing the indifferent category emerged. Alongside this 'time' and 'feeling pressured' also presented an additional category for exploration. What follows is a brief description of each of the areas of discussion on methods.

### 3.5.1 Methods Discussed.

The discussion with the children took place around the overriding question of how best they felt they could represent to a researcher what it was like to be a bilingual/bicultural child in state elementary school in Cyprus. This representation was highlighted by the presentation of five common methods of data collection used with children – drawing, writing, using a camera or video camera, role play and the interview.



### 3.5.1.1 Drawing

From the discussion on using drawings to express themselves initial concern over personal talent or ability seemed to put some of the children off with preliminary comments such as:

Girl 1, eleven: “I’m no good at drawing”

Boy 2, nine: “I don’t know how to draw”

Girl 2, eleven: “... it is really hard to draw what you are thinking.”

Upon further discussion the importance of not feeling judged and being given enough time to do a good job materialized. Once it was established there would not be judgment on the quality of the drawing, and they could take as much time as needed to complete the drawing the initial negativity shifted and comments emerged such as:

Girl 1, eleven: “Yeah, cause when you have time to think what you’re going to draw and like. . .uh. . .go inside yourself and think what you want to draw or what you feel like drawing.”

Girl 1, eleven: “Just draw and you don’t have to be afraid if it feels, if it like looks bad for other people”

Boy 2, eleven: “Well about me I would like, uh to draw myself right there because I draw almost every day, so it would be kind of fun to draw I guess.”

What resulted was the general feeling that provided that there was a lack of judgment over the quality of the drawing and that enough time was given to complete the drawing in a manner they were happy with; the children were receptive to the idea of expressing themselves using drawing as a technique.

### 3.5.1.2 Writing

The children were explicit in their initial opinions about writing which they characterized as “boring”, “awful” and “hard”. Indeed writing was the only method on which the entire group was in agreement. All the children rejected the method even by substituting other methods (drawing and talking) as preferential such as in the following exchange:

Boy 2, nine: “No, I would enjoy talking.”

Moderator: “You’d enjoy talking, okay, ((laughter)) more than writing. Why wouldn’t you enjoy the writing? What is it, what is it about the writing which makes you say, “I’m not sure that I would enjoy that”?”

Girl 2, eleven: “Cause it’s writing!”

Additional characterizations of writing were:

Boy 1, eleven: “It’s like if you are going to write something you feel like you’re in school”

Girl 2, eleven: “You’re not free to write what you want to write.”

The general expression was that there was almost no manner in which writing could be made a desirable method, as it was too highly connected to work and judgment.

Additionally, the children demonstrated that they held writing to higher standard where precision rather than form or content is paramount.

### 3.5.1.3 Role Play

The idea of role playing with dolls or puppets was also viewed with clarity though interestingly it was the more dominant members of the group who set the tone here. The characterization was that this was childish behavior which they had outgrown. Reference was made to younger siblings who might still play as in the following exchange:

Girl 1, eleven: “I may play sometimes with my sister because that what she wants, but I don’t enjoy it. It’s like too childish.  
((emphasis on childish))

Boy 1, eleven: “Well, some people would think that we’re playing instead of showing what are we, so the other thing that some people won’t understand what we’re doing”

These comments related to perceptions that this was not appropriate behavior for their age group, unless it was as a means of entertaining or pacifying the demands of a younger sibling, and was therefore considered an undesirable activity especially if there would be others present.

### 3.5.1.4 Using a Camera or Video Camera

Surprisingly the use of a camera or video camera with which to document aspects of their lives did not seem to particularly excite the group. Indeed one of the main

concerns of the children was that of interpretation and representation of images. With comments such as:

Girl 1, eleven: “It’s difficult cause to take a picture of what you feel because maybe you take a picture that makes you feel sad and somebody happy,”

And in response to the question:

Moderator: “Do you think that it would be good to use a camera to show pictures of what it means to be a bilingual/bicultural child?”

Boy 1, eleven: “No, cause if you take a picture, let’s say a picture of me, if I take a picture of myself right now how are you going to tell if I’m bilingual?”

The children immediately took issue with what would be meant and or represented by photographs. Without them being there to provide a clear interpretation of what they had meant, how would others understand or interpret what they had felt or meant with the picture itself? The main concern was the representation and perceptions of others.

#### 3.5.1.5 Just Talking

Overall the children responded most positively to the idea of being interviewed – just talking. This preference was so prevalent that they often substituted talking for other methods; for example, when they expressed a lack of interest in another method, as follows.

Moderator: “You’re not sure about the writing? Is writing the type of thing that you think that you’d enjoy doing?”

Boy 2, nine: No, I would enjoy talking.

Additionally the children seemed to connect a certain sense of freedom to the idea of talking which was presented as less demanding than other methods.

Girl 2, eleven: “Yeah, then like we can talk, like talk about it and say about how do you feel and like if we like it or if we don’t like it and stuff like that.”

Girl 1, eleven: ((interprets)) “I think it would be easier like, if like you did( )and then like talk about it say how you feel, and how your life is, and if you like it, or if you want to see like to not be a bilingual child. So you could just (.) answer the questions and then talk with somebody.”

Moderator: “Okay what about you guys? Do you feel it would be easy for you to *explain to somebody*?”

Boy 2, nine: “It would be easier cause if you are talk then sometimes you won’t know what you are saying and it’s better than doing another thing, talking.”

The children’s preference for talking was also guarded when we discussed the idea of who they would be talking to. Here the children were vocal on the point that it would be difficult to discuss certain issues with any adult and particularly an unknown adult as illustrated in the following exchange:

Moderator: “Do you think that kids would talk easily to an adult about what being bilingual means?”

Girl 1, eleven: “I don’t think to an adult, but, I mean they could say it to a friend and then like that friend can like say it to an adult. It’s not easy a child to describe how it feels to an adult because sometimes they say, I mean children say, adults sometimes are I mean sometimes are (.) like they are (.) more like

um, teachers I mean, they tell you to do something and like, sometimes when you don't want to do it they may shout at you and you won't feel comfortable to say that to an adult, you would rather say it to a friend or a child than say it . . .”

Girl 2, eleven: “It depends on how well you know the adult, like if it is somebody you don't know you just met them that day you don't feel comfortable if you've known them for quite a long time you're more comfortable talking.”

Moderator: “Okay, What about you guys?”

Boy 1, eleven: “Well, (.) I agree that talking to an adult isn't comfortable but if you talk to a kid your age, your sister, brother, your bigger brother, your mom, your dad you feel more comfortable than talking to a stranger.”

#### 3.5.1.6 Location and Privacy

The final area of discussion was about location regarding where the children might feel most comfortable being interviewed. Comments reflected clear displeasure over the idea of being interviewed at school even in the library or another private area as seen in the following extracts:

Girl 1, eleven: “I don't think so because I mean other kids will just wait outside for their friends or they would begging them to come in with them. They may overhear at the door they may be under the window outside, you never know what they can do so they can hear what you are going to say.”

Boy 1, eleven: “Well, if it's at school um, maybe you could say something that nobody had ever heard before and then the other kid says to the other kid, that thing that they never heard before, they keep saying until all the kids at the school know about the thing.”

Girl 2, eleven: “I think, um when you have all those kids at the school you’re like you’re (even if you’re in a different room you still don’t feel) very comfortable like you still don’t know what might happen.”

The feedback here clearly focused on the idea of school even in a classroom alone was not a secure environment to discuss things and the children clearly felt that there was always a great possibility to being overhead or gossiped about at school. As a result, the preference was for a place where they felt comfortable with the suggestion of “at home” or “in my room” predominating as seen in the following exchange:

Moderator: “If you could choose a place then, where would you choose? If somebody said to you I want to come and talk to you about . . .”

Boy 2, nine: “My room”.

Boy 1, eleven: “Well, there is one big thing at least a room in your house, in the kitchen, cause when you’re somewhere in your house it is very comfortable, but if you’re somewhere you’ve never been before you’re scared, uncomfortable, shy”.

This preference is reflected within the literature as Scott states;

While initial analysis looked for the basics of how receptive the children would feel regarding the use of specific data collection methods what immersed were two overarching themes: the importance of not being judged or misrepresented by the research, and the importance of a sense of choice about methods used.

### 3.5.2 Judgment and Representation

In interpreting the finding concerns over judgment and misrepresentation were the overriding criteria the children used in evaluating any given method. Initial negativity towards a method was often diminished once it was clear that the quality of the work would not be judged such as in the case of drawing. The importance of judgment and representation of self, emerged again with regard the comments on role play, writing, drawing and taking pictures or video. This concern with how their work would or could be interpreted and how clearly they understood the ease with which what they intended to project or say with any of these methods is perhaps best show in the following extract from Girl 1 (eleven) in her attempt to explain how she understood others might misjudge or misinterpret the meaning she might have wanted to project:

“... people don’t see everything with the same eye, it like um, people may see something that you’d like, they don’t like, and like you can’t, you can’t, you have to find the person that feels like the same thing with you that likes flowers and doesn’t like boneheads or likes boneheads and doesn’t like flowers. To show it to him and then he’ll understand because if you show it to just a person, he may think you’re happy or you’re sad because he won’t think exactly how you think. You may want to show that you’re confused, and like take a picture of something and the person won’t understand what you want to say, what do you feel like or . . . “(Girl 1, eleven).

This concern over representation is the flip side to Mauthner’s (1997) discussion on the importance of truthfulness for children. Mauthner speaks to the importance of representing yourself truthfully to children when you research, yet here what the children are expressing is the additional concern of feeling that they have been represented with truthfulness by the methods used in the data collection. Indeed this confirms what Prout and Christensen (2002) refer to as the need for children involved in research to protect their own interests. Kellett and Ding stress the complexity of the



issue of adult interpretation of children's lives and conclude, "That the best way adults can gain access to children's worlds is by fostering greater participation of children and young people themselves. The more children are given a primary research voice the less adults will be required to 'interpret' their worlds." (2004, p 172).

### 3.5.2 Individuality

The second theme which developed was the significance of respecting the individuality of each child. During the discussion on methods there was often a divergence of opinions among the children, such as with the idea of drawing where it was the elder boy who felt more receptive to the method use explaining that it was something he already did almost every day. The same sense of individuality arose with relation to location with some children clearly preferring the use of the home as an interview location and others not. Added to this was the split in terms of being interviewed either alone or with a friend. Here there were very varied responses with some children choosing with a friend, others alone and one alongside family members. All of which confirmed the importance of a data collection method which was responsive to the individual child's preferences.

## Appendix 4: Consent Letter Samples and Information Letters

### Information Letter Distributed to Solicit Participants

My name is Katherine Fincham – Louis and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Edinburgh. I am at the stage of collecting data for my thesis. The research I would like to conduct is an exploration of **the experience of Greek/English bilingual/bicultural children in state elementary schools in Cyprus.**

Specifically I am interested in talking to children about their experience of school and their language use both at school with friends and teachers and within the home. In order to conduct my research I have to speak directly to children. These interviews would take place either at your home or at another mutually agreeable location (café, restaurant). In total I would be interested in speaking with your child approximately three (3) times. These interviews would take approximately 30 minutes each. In addition I would ask each child and his/her parents to fill in a language use chart (a chart detailing your language use). I would also be interested in a brief biographical interview with the parents of each child to establish some educational background on the child – where they went to kindergarten, first words etc.

In addition to the interviews each child will be asked to produce a piece of work to express him/herself – a picture, photo montage, video etc. This would be used during in the interview.

The information I collect will remain anonymous and your child would not be identified by name. I will be using the data collected to write my thesis and I may also seek to publish my work.

Once you have learnt more about the study and provided you agree that your son or daughter may participate, I will then independently ask your child if I have his/her

agreement as well. **This is important as it is crucial that your child does not feel pressured into participation.**

Additional details about my study would be sent to you should you agree to allow your child to participate.

The children I am interested in asking to participate in the study:

- Should be between the ages of 8 and 12
- Should be Greek/English speakers (fluency of each language is not an issue)
- Should attend a state elementary school (Dimottico)
- Should be in grades 4 through 6
- Should have one parent who is British, Scottish, Irish, American, Canadian, South African or Australian
- Should have one parent who is Greek Cypriot.
- Should **not** have a parent who is a repatriated Cypriot – English-Cypriot.

**If you and your child are interested in participating or would like further information please respond to this email at [fincham.k@unic.ac.cy](mailto:fincham.k@unic.ac.cy) or contact me by phone at 99-499568.**

Child's Consent Form for Study for Katherine Fincham-Louis Doctorate in  
Education Candidate at the University of Edinburgh.

I am writing and studying about Greek/English children at Dimottico (elementary school) in Cyprus. I want to learn about the experience of Greek/English children at school. I don't know what it is like to be you, so I need you to tell me. If you agree to talk to me, I am going to ask you questions. Some of the things I want to ask you about are things about your languages – Greek and English – when you use them, where, who you speak to in each language. I am also going to ask you question about you, who you think you are, who you think other people think you are, your friends at school and how school is for you.

Sometimes adults don't know about children's lives at school. The report I write up will help adults to understand the experience of children like you.

Before we start talking I will ask you to fill in a form that tells me about when, where and with whom you use English and Greek. I will ask your mom and dad to fill in the same form about themselves.

You don't have to talk to me if you don't want to and you won't get in to trouble. If you do decide to talk to me you can talk to me by yourself or we can ask your mom, dad, sister, brother or friend to sit with us while we talk. They would just sit with us and listen and I would talk to you.

When we talk it is not like a test – there are no right or wrong answers. There are no trick questions. Everything and anything you say is ok.

When we are talking if you decide you want to stop and go that is ok, just tell me and we will.

When we are talking I will put the tape recorder on so that I can remember what we have said for my report. If you want me to turn off the tape recorder you can tell me and I will.

After we have finished talking the words on the tape will be typed by me. The tape and the copy of your words from the tape will only be seen by me, my teachers (Sue and Morwenna). After we have finished with the words and the tape they will be locked away for 5 years then destroyed because those are my school rules.

When I write my report I might write about some of the things you have said but I won't use your name so people won't know that you said them.

Whatever you tell me when we are talking I will keep private. If you tell me something that makes me think that you might not be safe I will talk to you about it first and ask you what you want to do. I may suggest that you to talk to an adult or ask you if it is okay for me to talk to an adult for you.

Your parents have said its okay for me to talk with you today, but if you don't want to it's okay too. I won't talk to you unless you say it's okay.

You can ask me as many questions you like before you decide if you want us to talk.

## Children's Consent Form

### **Katherine has told me that:**

- I don't have to talk to her today if I don't want to and I won't get into trouble.
- I can talk to her alone or ask someone else to be with us.
- Before we start talking I will fill in a form about Greek and English.
- She will be asking me questions about the languages I speak, my school life and who I am.
- There are no right or wrong answers.
- It is not a test.
- There are no trick questions.
- I don't have to answer all of the questions if I don't want to and that is okay.
- Anytime I want to stop talking it is okay and she will turn the tape off.
- She is writing a report for her University work.
- She will write about some of the things I tell her about but won't use my name.
- The tape and the copy of my words from the tape will only be seen by her, her teachers, Sue and Morwenna and that the tape and the copy of my words from the tape will be kept private.
- I can ask her as many questions as I want before I decide if I want to talk to her.

I agree it is ok for Katherine to talk to me today.

---

I agree it is ok for Katherine to use the tape today.

---

\_\_\_\_\_ (I agree) Day

---

**Sourced from: <http://www.otago.ac.nz/acadcomm/childfriendlyconsent.html>**

Informed Consent Form for Study for Katherine Fincham-Louis Doctorate in  
Education Candidate at the University of Edinburgh.

**Individual consent form for** \_\_\_\_\_  
*(child's name)*

**Principal Investigator:** Katherine Fincham – Louis  
Doctorate in Education Candidate at the University of Edinburgh.

**Both you and your child will sign and retain a copy of the consent certificate provided you both agree to participate in the study.**

I am Katherine Fincham – Louis a doctoral candidate at the University of Edinburgh. I am at the stage of beginning my thesis and am interested in the experiences of bilingual/bicultural children in Cypriot elementary schools. I believe that this group of children is one which has yet to be addressed by either policy or research in Cyprus and I am interested in exploring from the child's perspective **what it means to be a bilingual/bicultural child in a monolingual school system in Cyprus.**

In order to conduct this research I need to talk directly to children about their experiences. I will need to talk to both boys and girls in B Kyklos about their experiences of being bilingual/bicultural at school.

Once you have learnt more about the study and provided you agree that your son or daughter may participate, I will then independently ask your child if I have his/her agreement as well. This is important as it is crucial that your child does not feel pressured into participation. Both of you have to agree independently before I can begin.

**The Purpose:**

The purpose of the interview(s) in which your child will participate, should you both agree to do so, is for me to explore the issue of what it means to be a bilingual/bicultural

child in state elementary school in Cyprus. This means that I will be asking your child general questions related to the following areas:

*Use of Language – Greek and English – with whom, when and where, their attitude towards both languages.*

*Experience of School - how do they report school life for themselves, friendships, sense of inclusion and belonging vs. lack of inclusion or a sense of being an outsider. Exploring any reasons for this.*

*Sense of Identity – how do they describe themselves, how do they think others perceive them?*

*Do they report any significant issues related to their dual nationality?*

**Type of Research:**

The research will involve the use of open ended questions with your child. The interview can take place either in your own home, or if you prefer at any other suitable location such as a café or restaurant. Your child can choose to be interviewed alone or for you or any other person (sibling, friend) to be present during the interview process.

**Selection of Participants:**

I am interested in talking to Greek/English children all of whom are in B Kyklos as this means they have had at least three years of primary education.

**Voluntary Participation:**

You are welcome to ask me as many questions as you want about the purpose and content of my research and to take as much time as you need to decide on the participation of your child.

**Protocol:**

Your son or daughter will be interviewed by me for a period of no longer than half an hour. Prior to the interview I will ask you, your spouse and your child to complete language use forms. These forms indicate the use of language for an individual. This information will be used to inform some of the questions I will ask during the interview process.

The entire interview will be recorded by me and the recording will be kept confidentially by me. The results of the interview will be transcribed by me. The



results of this interview will be used to guide the final questions I will use in the study towards my doctorate. and ultimately may be used within the methods chapter of the dissertation itself.

*There is a slight risk that your son/daughter may share some personal or confidential information by chance or that he/she may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. However, I do not wish this to happen, and he/she may refuse to answer any question or not take part in a portion of the discussion/interview/questionnaire if he/she feels the question(s) are too personal or if talking about them makes him/her uncomfortable.*

*In addition, though the content of the interview process is confidential, I do recognize that there is a small possibility that your child might reveal information which is of a serious nature. If this is the case, I will first discuss the issue with your child recommending that he/she consult with an adult who can help him or her, or offer to speak with such an adult on his/her behalf.*

**Benefit:**

There will be no immediate benefit to your child or you, but your child's participation will help in exploring the experience of this particular group of children in Cyprus and perhaps identifying areas where policy makers may want to focus in the future. In addition as a token thank you to the children for their time I am offering each child a movie certificate from K Cineplex.

**Confidentiality:**

I will not be sharing information about your son or daughter outside of the research team. The information that I collect from this research project will be kept confidential. Information about your child that will be collected from the research will be put away and no-one but the researcher will be able to see it.

**Sharing of Findings:**

At the end of the study, I will be sharing what I have learnt with your child so as to check that I have interpreted his/her input correctly. I will not though be able to share specific information from the interview process with you unless your child expressly

grants me his/her permission to do so. I may also publish the results in order that other interested people may learn from this research.

**Right to Refusal:**

You may choose not to have your child participate in this study and your child does not have to take part in this research if she/he does not wish to do so. Your child may stop participating in the interview at any time that you or she/he wish.

**Contact Information:**

If you have any questions you may ask them now or later, even after the study has started. If you wish to ask questions later, you may contact me at: **99499568** or by email at [fincham.k@unic.ac.cy](mailto:fincham.k@unic.ac.cy)

I have read the foregoing information. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily for my child to participate as a participant in this study and understand that I have the right to withdraw her/him from the study at any time.

Print Name of Parent or Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent of Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Child \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I have accurately read or witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the parent/guardian of the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

Print name of researcher \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of researcher \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Day/month/year

A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been provided to the parent or guardian of the participant \_\_\_\_\_  
(initialed by researcher/assistant)

## Appendix 5: Sample Artifacts

### Copy of Language Use Chart

The following are some questions about the language you use to speak to different people and the language people use to speak to you, there are no right or wrong answers. Leave an empty space where you don't know what to write.

Which language do YOU use to speak to the following people?

	Almost always in Greek	In Greek more than English	In about the same amount of Greek and English	In English more than Greek	Almost always in English	How often do you see this person?
Father		✓				daily
Mother					✓	daily
Sister(s)			✓			daily
Brother(s)	N/A					
Cousins	(no Greek speaking cousins)				✓	almost never
Friends in the Classroom	✓					5x/week
Friends in the playground	✓					5x/week
Friends you see outside of school - at your house or theirs			✓			2/month
Teachers	✓					5x/wk
Neighbors		✓				several times/week
Grandparents (your mom's parents)					✓	2x/year
Grandparents (your dad's parents)	✓					several times/wk
Other relatives			✓			

①

The following are some questions about the language you use to speak to different people and the language people use to speak to you, there are no right or wrong answers. Leave an empty space where you don't know what to write.

Which language do other people use to speak to YOU?

	Almost always in Greek	In Greek more than English	In about the same amount of Greek and English	In English more than Greek	Almost always in English	How often do you see this person?
Father			✓			
Mother					✓	
Sister(s)			✓			
Brother(s)	N/A					
Cousins					only English speakers	
Friends in the Classroom	✓					
Friends in the playground	✓					
Friends you see outside of school - at your house or theirs	✓					
Teachers	✓					
Neighbors	✓					
Grandparents (your mom's parents)					✓	
Grandparents (your dad's parents)	✓					
Other relatives		✓				

2

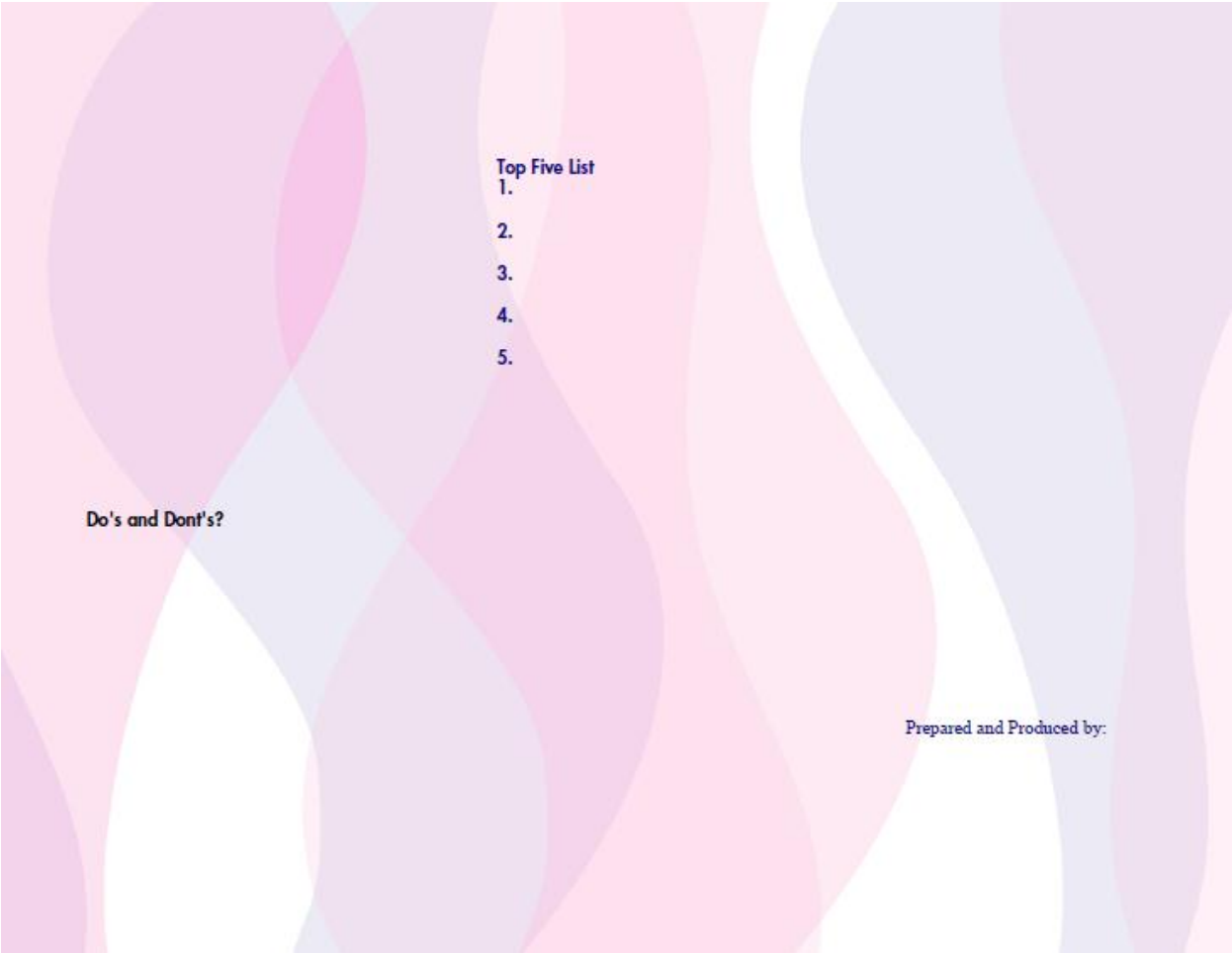
Which language do you use to do the following?

	Almost always Greek	In Greek more than English	In about the same amount of Greek and English	In English more than Greek	Almost always in English
Speak on the phone			✓		
Text or message					✓
Use MSN/Face Book /hi five etc	N/A				
Use the internet/computer/www					✓
Watch TV/DVDs				✓	
Listen to music				✓	
Read books/ magazines/newspapers	✓				
Watch films at the cinema in					✓
Earn money	N/A				
Play games in, ex. monopoly, Scrabble, Trivia	✓				
Use in clubs you belong to - football club, swimming, guides etc	✓				

3

## Copy of Brochure Template and Completed Brochures





**Top Five List**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Do's and Dont's?**

**Prepared and Produced by:**



My advice for a new  
Bilingual/  
Bicultural kid at my  
school.

Completed by





### Do's and Don't's?

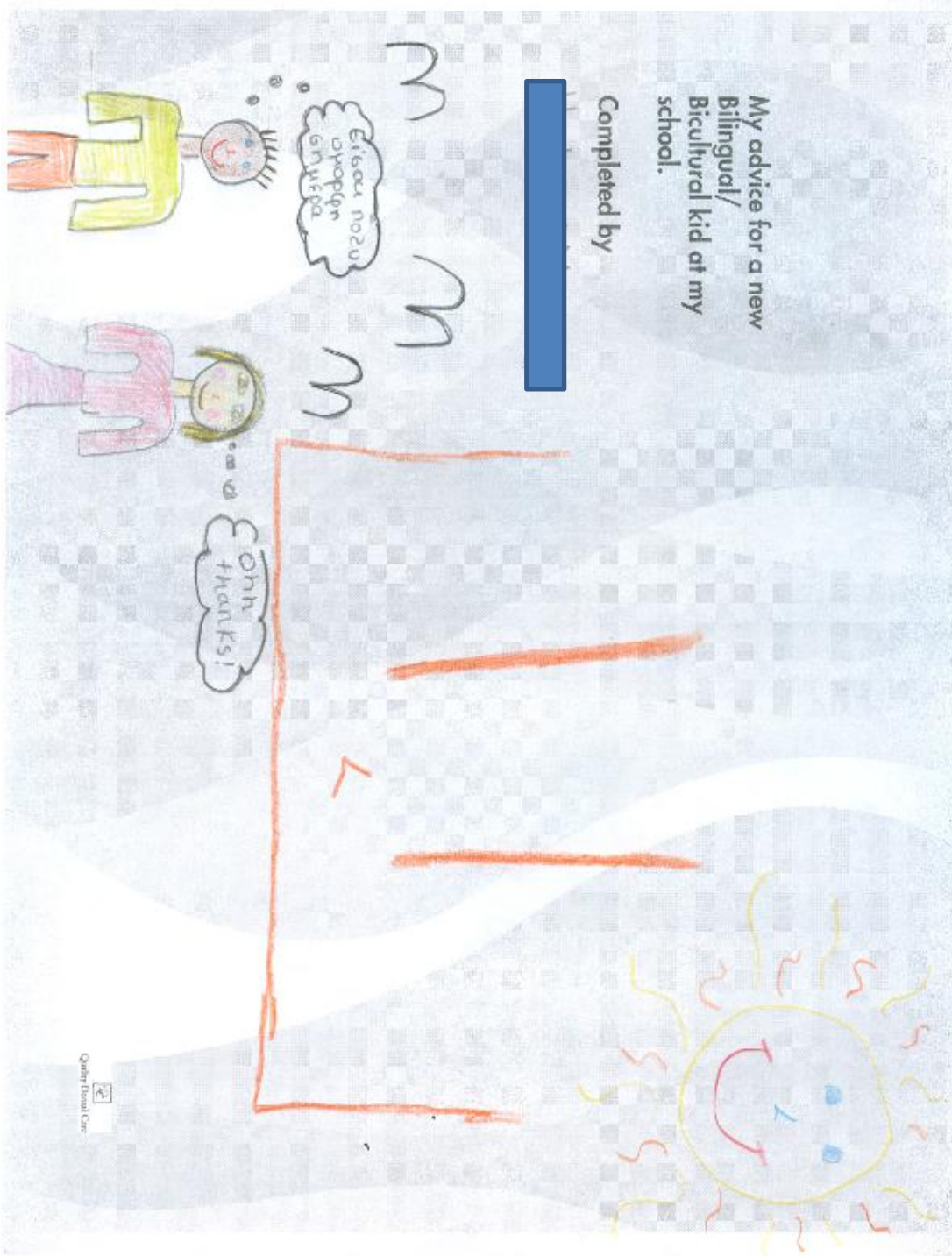
Prepared and Produced by:

### Top Five List

- Top Five List
1.  $\text{supp}(A) = \text{col}(A)$
  2.  $\text{rank}(A) = \dim(\text{col}(A))$
  3.  $\text{rank}(A) = \dim(\text{row}(A))$
  4.  $\text{rank}(A) + \dim(\text{null}(A)) = n$
  5.  $\text{rank}(A) = \dim(\text{range}(A))$

My advice for a new  
Bilingual/  
Bicultural kid at my  
school.

Completed by





HI!

#### Top Five List

1. Be friends with everyone
2. Support your friends in time of need
3. Make sure your kind to everybody
4. Keep trying.
5. Make it as easy as you can for yourself



#### Do's and Don't's?

- Don't try to be someone you're not!
- Do share your english skills with kids that need help.
- Don't be shy to say your opinion
- Do the thing that's right and listen to your teacher
- Don't take it personally if your teacher shouts at you
- Do try your hardest in every class! NEVER STOP!

Prepared and Produced by:



My advice for a new  
Bilingual/  
Bicultural kid at my  
school.

Completed by





## Sample Sentence Completion Tasks

I would like you to finish the following sentence for me so we can talk about your answers when we meet. You can write in Greek or English or have your mom or dad write for you. There are no tricks; there are no right or wrong answers. If you can't think of what to write then just leave it out.

The thing I like best about being able to speak both Greek and English is I get to know people better because in Cyprus the languages are English and Greek

The thing I like least about being able to speak both Greek and English is

There isn't anything!

The thing I like best about going to Dimottiko is

EVERYTHING! The teachers, my friends, the school, my class

The thing I like least about going to Dimottiko is

I really don't like science that much.

When I think about me and who I am I would say I

am shy, friendly, fun

When I think about English I think

USA! my grandparents the lake Disney channel, our house

When I think about Greek I think

my home, my family my relatives, the beach

I would like you to finish the following sentence for me so we can talk about your answers when we meet. You can write in Greek or English or have your mom or dad write for you. There are no tricks; there are no right or wrong answers. If you can't think of what to write then just leave it out.

The thing I like best about being able to speak both Greek and English is

that I can talk with my friends in Greek and my mum and family in English or in Greek. The thing I like least about being able to speak both Greek and English is that I can talk to my sister and dad.

The thing I like best about going to Dimottiko is spending time with friends and learn more Greek and other subjects.

The thing I like least about going to Dimottiko is that I can not talk English at Dimottiko. I would like to speak both languages.

When I think about me and who I am I would say I am really good and I am happy I can speak two languages.

When I think about English I think I can talk perfect English and communicate with American and English people.

When I think about Greek I think I can talk perfect Greek to.



[Redacted]

I would like you to finish the following sentence for me so we can talk about your answers when we meet. You can write in Greek or English or have your mom or dad write for you. There are no tricks; there are no right or wrong answers. If you can't think of what to write then just leave it out.

The thing I like best about being able to speak both Greek and English is *Καταλαβαίνω τι λένε, ξέρω να μιλάω αγγλικά και ελληνικά.*

The thing I like least about being able to speak both Greek and English is

The thing I like best about going to Dimottiko is *I know how to speak Greek better and write.*

The thing I like least about going to Dimottiko is *Sometimes they make fun of me when I speak English.*

When I think about me and who I am I would say I am

When I think about English I think *Nothing*

When I think about Greek I think *Nothing*



I would like you to finish the following sentence for me so we can talk about your answers when we meet. You can write in Greek or English or have your mom or dad write for you. There are no tricks; there are no right or wrong answers. If you can't think of what to write then just leave it out.

The thing I like best about being able to speak both Greek and English is *that i can understand and the a languages.*

The thing I like least about being able to speak both Greek and English is

The thing I like best about going to Dimottiko is *when we have the 3 breaks so we can eat.*

The thing I like least about going to Dimottiko is *when they give us a lot of books to carry in our school bag.*

When I think about me and who I am I would say I am *creative and that i love books.*

When I think about English I think *that is a great language, and i can*

When I think about Greek I think *that is a difficult language for others to learn.*

I would like you to finish the following sentence for me so we can talk about your answers when we meet. You can write in Greek or English or have your mom or dad write for you. There are no tricks; there are no right or wrong answers. If you can't think of what to write then just leave it out.

The thing I like best about being able to speak both Greek and English is

I can speak to more people

The thing I like least about being able to speak both Greek and English is

when I speak english in front of friends they keep laughing at me because they think it's funny sounding

The thing I like best about going to Dimottiko is

I get to see my friends

The thing I like least about going to Dimottiko is

The teachers aren't doing what they should to guide us. (supervise during breaks)

When I think about me and who I am I would say I am

a stranger ~~with~~ at school.  
(~~frustrated~~)  
(feels different)


When I think about English I think

that I can talk to my relatives in the States (esp. grandma & grandpa)

When I think about Greek I think

I don't want to speak it.

· cogililif



I would like you to finish the following sentence for me so we can talk about your answers when we meet. You can write in Greek or English or have your mom or dad write for you. There are no tricks; there are no right or wrong answers. If you can't think of what to write then just leave it out.

The thing I like best about being able to speak both Greek and English is *because I can answer questions in my classroom, when we have English.*

The thing I like least about being able to speak both Greek and English is *my mom makes me explain everything*

The thing I like best about going to Dimottiko is *when I see my friends at break time.*

The thing I like least about going to Dimottiko is *having homework*

When I think about me and who I am I would say I am *Ballerina*

When I think about English I think *I don't know yet*

When I think about Greek I think *still, don't know*

## Appendix 6: Sample Interview Questions and Coding Chart Examples

### Sample Prompt Questions to Discuss Language Use

Can you describe for me a bit about your usual day at school?

What do you consider to be your languages?

Are there any other kids in your class who are like you – both Greek and English?

Do your friends know you speak Greek and English?

How does that make you feel?

Do your teachers know? How does that make you feel?

Do you ever use English at school when its not English lesson?

What do you do when you think of the answer in English? Have you ever spoken English to your teacher? Why or why not?

Do you speak to your dad in English?

Do you speak to your mom in Greek? Do you ever talk to your Mom in English in front of your friends at school? How do you feel about that?

Code- switching questions related to classroom.

You said on your form you sometimes use English with teachers? When does this happen?

What happens when you know the answer in English not Greek?

Do you think you should be allowed to use English at school?

Do you think it would be better/easier for you if you only spoke one language?

Do you think knowing Greek and English helps you at school or not?

How do you think knowing Greek and English helps you in your regular life? How important is it?

If you had to think about the role/job of English in your life – how would you describe it? How do you think your life would be different if you didn't speak English?

You said on your chart that you didn't like the fact that no one spoke English at dimottico. Why?

Would you consider that English is kind of more yours than say another friend of yours who takes English classes at a frontisterrio? Why or why not?

What role do you think English plays in your life? Can you imagine how your life would be different if for example you didn't know English? How do you think your life would be different?

## Sample Prompt Questions to Discuss School Experience Questions

“What can you tell me about your experience of being bilingual/bicultural at school?”

How do you think being both Greek and English changes your experience of school?  
Does it make school different for you than for other kids in any specific way?

What is the thing you like best about being a bilingual child at dimottico?

What is the thing you like least?

How do you think your friends see you? Do you think they think about you as both Greek and English? Greek – English ?? How do you think they think about you? Why?

How do you think of yourself? Are you Cypriot, English, Cypriot and English? Why?

If you think about school and you think about yourself at school and being Greek and English can you tell me about the best day you had at school as a Greek/English kid?

And how about your worst day as a Greek/English kid?

I want you to imagine this, this is a little bit of an imagine question. Imagine if you were on msn and somehow you met like a new friend ok and this person was like a friend of a friend of yours so you don't know them, ok, and they didn't know how you were like you were making a pen pal, ok, in another country with msn, ohm, chose a country which country would you like to have a pen pal from?

Can you tell me about the parts of you that are from Cyprus and the parts that are from America?

## Prompt Sheet with Sample Questions for Third Interview with Parents.

What are the things that you think are important for them to know before they start school, and are there any areas where you think they need special information because they are bilingual/bicultural?

What advice would you have for new a bilingual/bicultural child who was going to attend your school?

What are some of the important pieces of information you could offer to make school better for him/her.

What are the things that you think are important for him/her to know?

Is there information which you think is special for bilingual/bicultural kids to know?

Areas to prompt at if needed:

- Friendships – making, keeping friends
- School work
- Using both languages or managing both languages
- Feeling about themselves – identity – being Cypriot/
- Bullying?
- Dealing with teachers
- Dealing with parents?

What advice would you have for the parents of bilingual/bicultural children who are going to have children who attend Dimottico?

Areas to prompt at if needed:

- Schoolwork and success – school support
- Dealing with teachers
- Liaison with the school
- Supporting your children – issues of friendships, bullying?, identity
- Managing both languages
- Parental roles in school – where do the parents fit?

### Sample Chart Prepared from Interview Data

Stella's First Interview Chart – School Experience	My Comments
<p>So the first thing I just wanted to ask you is if you could tell me a little bit about school? Your day at school how's that usually for you?</p> <p>Well fine, fine.</p> <p>Ok what do you do? You go to school?</p> <p>I go to school, I go to the classroom and my classmates, ohm I'm the first one there, and they come in the classroom and we play games and sometimes we go downstairs to play football, or something and when the bell rings we come upstairs and we do lesson.</p>	<p>Important to acknowledge that the issue of language and identity is not paramount to the children's everyday school reality. Though it does play a role in their experience.</p>
<p>No, just you not about speaking English and Greek at school but just you what is it like to be you at school? It's kind of a big question</p> <p>Yeah, sometimes always I feel good I mean I love it but sometimes when we get in fights, uh I don't like it so much.</p> <p>What's it that you say you don't like? Being you?</p> <p>No uh yeah like they make me they think like that I'm from America and I'm like different from them and they make fun of me in school and um the mother's like they don't understand that I mean they don't understand that I'm like them, I think. <b>They think I'm different from like other countries.</b></p> <p>Do you think that this is how the other kids see you at school? Do they see you as different?</p> <p>I don't know.</p>	<p>Clearly recounting that she has been made to feel like an outsider because of her duality.</p> <p>She seems here to be trying to hold onto the concept of her being 'like the others' this idea of essentializing differences so she fits in. It would seem that this is at times challenging because in other ways there is a sense of 'being special and different' which is a positive difference for the kids – they are really striving to manage this – to keep it is balance – be different, speak English = something positive but it must not be too different.</p>
<p>No ok when do you, you said that when you have fights basically you know that sometimes it's not so nice when you have fights with other kids.</p>	<p>Again much of what she experiences at school is not directly related to her being mixed – school is much more than the role of her culture and</p>



Yeah.  
 What happens when you have those fights that make it not so nice?  
 Cause we fight and then the parents come to the school and the parents came and they blamed me for no reason \_\_\_\_  
 Cause like I was there and I didn't say nothing and I was like that and I was playing with the rope the jump rope and blamed me and the parents came and blamed me and the principal blamed me for no reason.  
 Why did you think they blamed you?  
 Because hum there is another classmate of mine she's her name's Christiana too, and sometimes they confuse the names and they think that I am and uh so.

language. Complex social lives of children.

The fact that your mom is from America and your dad is from Cyprus, does that make what school is like different or does it change it in any way for you?  
 No.

The question here is should it? If we believe that the school has a responsibility to acknowledge the individuality of every child it should play some role somewhere.

What would you call yourself would you say you're Cypriot, you're American you're Cypriot and American?  
 Ohm Cypriot and American, but I speak better Greek.  
 You speak better Greek, ok and what's the part of you that American?  
 Like?  
 I mean how can you think about the part of you that American?  
 I don't know I mean, I don't know.  
 Ok, can you think about the part of you that's Greek? Is there something about you that you say this is why I say I'm Greek or this is why I say I'm American?  
 Or this is why I say I'm Cypriot American?

My teacher told me that they, when a lot of teachers came from Bulgaria and stuff and we were introducing ourselves and I told them that I'm half American and half

Essentializing differences - the teacher puts her into the role here.

Cypriot and my teacher, my teacher told them that I was only Cypriot and my mom's only American and yeah.

How did that make you feel when he said that?

Bad.

Yeah, and did you say anything to him after?

Do you know why he said that? Probably you didn't like [Yeah] that he said that, I could see that.

So if you think about yourself at school then as a Cypriot American kid at school can you tell me what your best day has been at school the time that if there was day that really stood out for you for being a Cypriot American kid, not just your best day at school but a day did you ever have a day where you thought wow this was a great day to be me a Cypriot American kid?

Yeah, like uh there was a day like it was really I don't know there's a lot of times.

There's been a lot of times?

Yeah.

Yeah where you felt like its great to be you the Cypriot American kid at school?

Have you ever had a day that stands out where you thought boy this is the worst day to be a Cypriot American kid at school?

Yup.

Yeah what was that?

Well it was that day that we had a fight one day they were always making fun of me like one classmate he was like sits next to me (diplanos?) yeah he was making fun of me that I'm American and I don't have to be here and to go back to my country and stuff but he's from Georgia I think and he was making fun of me and stuff.

So that was not a good day to be (yeah) to be you. Ok let me see if you think about your friends at school do they see you? How do they see you? What do they think

Though she answers that there have been lots of times – there is no concrete example that she can recount.

Interesting that in this case it is a child who is from Georgia – this is a group that is 'traditionally' viewed as an underclass in the society here.

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you are?

I don't know but my best friend  
\_\_\_\_\_ she like the other girl  
Christiana she always makes fun of me and  
stuff and she doesn't want \_\_\_\_\_ to be  
next to me I mean with me and she is trying  
to make my \_\_\_\_\_  
like Christiana thinks like \_\_\_\_\_ is my  
best friend but like \_\_\_\_\_ she is my best  
friend

What do you think your friends see you as?

I have no idea.

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Stella First Interview Chart - Language	My comments
<p>Ya.</p> <p>Ya, ok what I wanted you to think about is do your friends know that you speak English and Greek?</p> <p>Yeah.</p> <p>Yeah, and what do they say about it?</p> <p>Well when we do English [um hum] I mean to school, they might like I speak to the teacher in English, and they make fun of me like they correct me like how Cypriot sounds</p> <p>The teacher corrects you or your friends correct you?</p> <p>My friends.</p> <p>Your friends correct you?</p> <p>Yeah.</p> <p>What do they correct you? Give me an example of how they correct you.</p> <p>Ohm, ok let me think hum like I say the time like four forty five and they like say like ohm four five minutes past and they correct me. Ok, but the teacher says like that I am right.</p> <p>Ok and how do you feel when they correct you like that?</p> <p>Not good.</p> <p>Why not good? What is it that sort of bothers you about that?</p> <p>Cause hum they think that they know better than me, ohm they don't speak so good English and like they correct me like if they do.</p> <p>Ok and why do you think they correct you then? If they don't speak such good English?</p> <p>Because ohm ok the teacher did a very big mistake and _____ and she write, she write it wrong and they started complaining to me that I did like wrong, like that.</p> <p>Ok alright and um do the teachers all the</p>	<p>It is interesting that several of the children recount this sort of correction from their peers regarding their production of English – it is possible that this is an attempt to equalize things. In that English is a high status high value language which the majority of kids in Cyprus will literally be forced to learn from an early age, perhaps this 'mockery' of the way these kids speak English has to do the others desire to minimize their language abilities – a means of ensuring they do not become too as Andrea said in her interview "show off" about their language skills.</p> <p>No role for English beyond the English classroom – the literature would say that the children's learning would be</p>

teachers at school do they know that you speak English and Greek?

Yeah.

And how does that make you feel that all your teachers know that you speak English and Greek?

Nice.

Yeah, do any of them ever speak to you in English? Outside of the English lesson?

No

impacted positively by their ability to draw on their mother/other tongue.

Ok do you think that like if you had a time and you were studying geographia (geography) or something like that and you wanted to use like a word in English that you'd be able to?

Uh uh.

Why not?

Ohm, [pause] ah cause like the teachers, we don't speak any English at school, we speak in Greek during Greek lessons we have to speak Greek.

As above.

At Dimottico do you think that you should be able to? [speak Greek]

No.

No not really, ok so do you ever use English at school when it's not English lesson then?

Yeah.

When?

When I talk with David and with Stavros

Who are David and Stavros'

Declan is my mom's friends \_\_\_\_\_ I mean she works for the UN and we know her, and uh to Stavros yeah because I know he was coming to our house we was like cousins.

Um, ok and they both go to your school?

Yeah.

Ok and are they or do they have moms or dads who are from other countries?

Yeah.

Declan's mom's from England and his

Again we see the children carving out a space for the language in an informal setting – there is contact with other bilingual children regardless of them not being in class and there are friendships formed and spaces created for the use of English at school – all informal.

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dads from Cyprus and Stavros' dad's from Cyprus and his mom's from America.

Ok so you're not in the same class with them but they are at your school.

Yeah.

Ok and when would you speak English with them?

In the break.

At the dialema when you see them

Yeah.

Ok and do you speak both Greek and English or do you only speak to them in English?

Both.

Oh you speak both, ok between the two.

[Interrupted here]

Do you think that it would be easier for you if you only spoke one language?

Ohm, I don't know, I think no because when I see movies I mean all of the movies they're ohm they speak English and like um a lot of people they speak English like that.

Ok, so aside from in movies how else is English part of your life what's the role what's the job that you see it in you know Christiana's life? What job does English have?

Uh it helps me.

What does it help you with?

Like if I go somewhere like when I'm going to go to Paris like Galia [France] Disney land I'm going to speak English

Ok and what about Greek what's the job of Greek in Christiana's life?

Greek I hate Greek. That helps me a lot cause for my school for my friends people everywhere I speak to them in Greek.

Salient to the role and importance of English in her life – so though language theory would say that as a second generation child there would be conditions for language loss, this does not seem to be the case because of the global and societal role of English as a global language.

The I hate Greek comment is interesting – is this because it is associated with school?

Ok, so in your life at school does knowing Greek and English help you?

At school?

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At school cause say we have a life at school and we have a life kind of outside of school, so when you think of your life at school does knowing Greek and English help you?

Like help me?

Yeah, both the fact that you know both languages [yeah] how does that help you?

Or does it help you?

Because [pause] say it again please?

Ok you said that knowing Greek and English is good because outside of school you know when you're in Paris you can speak so it has like something that you can use but when you think like about your life at school how do you see knowing Greek and English [ \_\_\_\_\_ ] does that help you in any way is it important in any way? At school that you know Greek and English?

Yeah hum like if we do an English test I know a little and if we when we talk English I know but to the yiorti [school plays]

Yeah yorites

Yeah I can speak English they put parts and I can speak.

Ah so they put parts and you had to speak in English?

Ah I think one time.

Yeah.

I think I had the part like I think but I don't know but a first grader she's \_\_\_\_\_ her mom's from another country and her dad's from Cyprus she spoke English and everybody laughed I mean it was a funny you know that she had.

Yeah.

And um EOKA

Ya proti tou aprili [first of April]

Yeah, they put Declan and Dimitri who they are from England; they are England people they talk English.

What is the role of English at school – to play the evil British soldiers during the struggle for independence??.

And they made them the part in the play?

Yeah.

To be the English guys?



## Diagram of Interview Data Themes Exploring Language at School

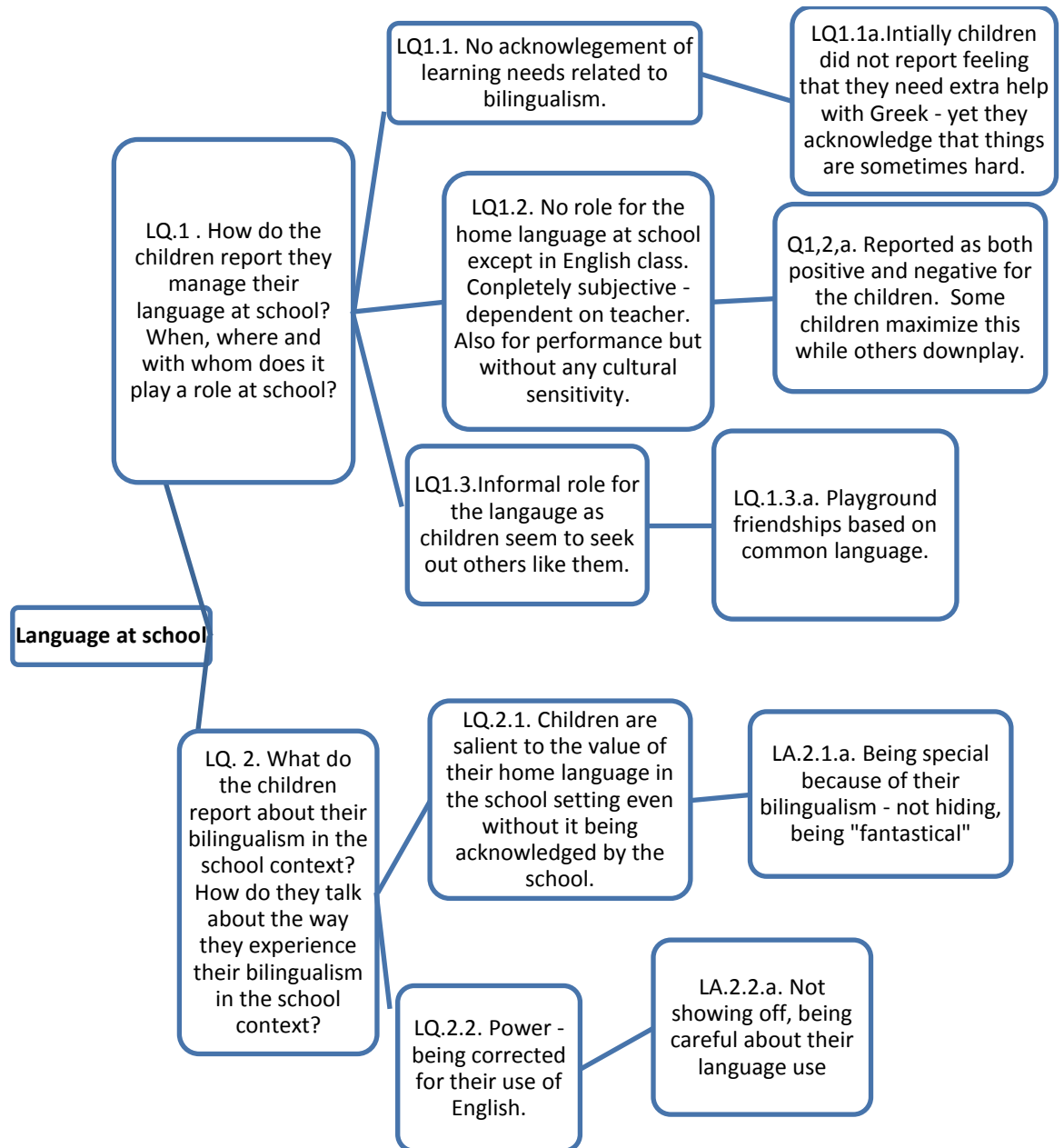
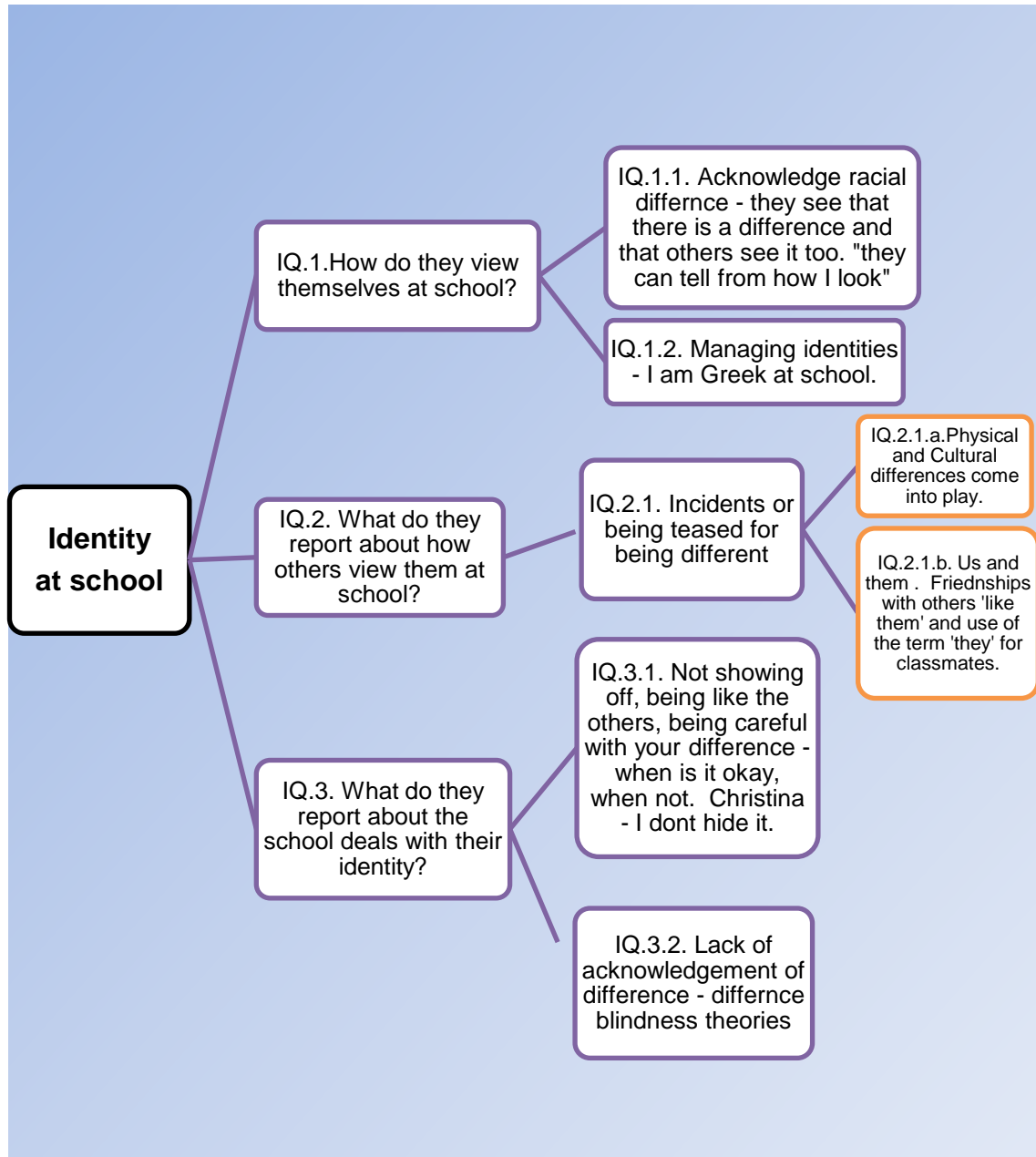
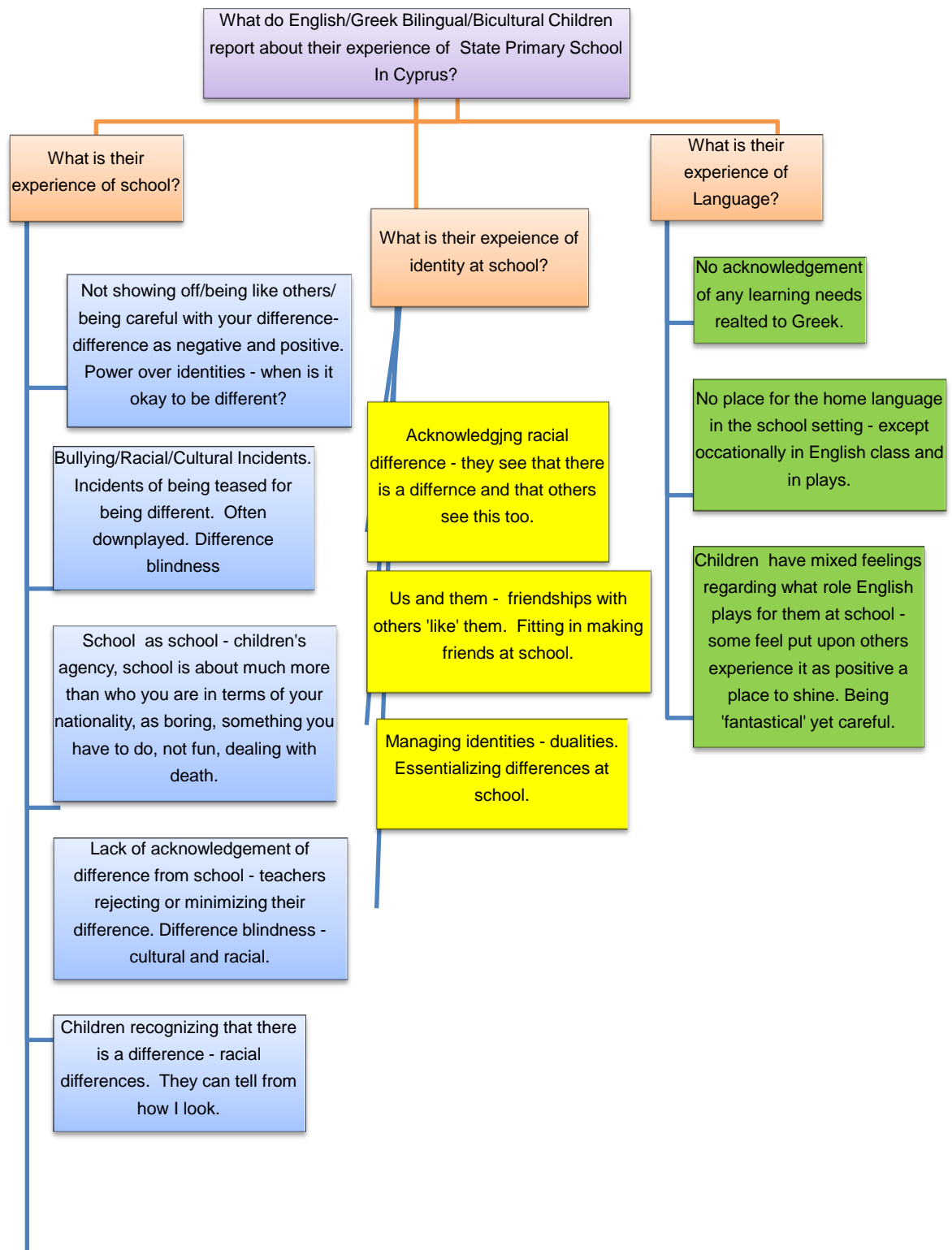


Diagram of Interview Data Themes Exploring Identity at School





## Appendix 7: Parental Interview Data Summary

### 7.0 Introduction

In addition to interviews with the children, interviews were also conducted with the parents. This was not done with the intention to use the parental data as a means of cross reference to the children's data, but rather that these data constitute an attempt to create a depth and complexity to the data. A summary of the main themes which emerged from the data collected via the parental interviews is presented below

In conjunction to the Parental Language Use Carts the parental interviews confirmed that these children were being raised bilingually. Although the type of bilingual upbringing they were experiencing did slightly vary, generally the parents tended to follow the one parent one language rule with each parent using his/her own mother tongue more exclusively in conversation with the child. The main difference here was that the Cypriot parents often reported mixing language use more often in communication with the children whereas language use with the non-Cypriot parent was almost exclusively in English.

Regarding formal educational settings such as nursery schools or kindergartens there was no child who had attended any type of bilingual or dual language school. In fact, the parents confirmed that all but two of the children had had exclusive Greek language education from nursery through to primary school. Only one child had attended a local English language nursery school until moving onto kindergarten at the state primary school at age five, while a second child although born in Cyprus had spent a year in America between ages four and five, returning to Cyprus to join the state system at age five. The interviews confirmed that all the children had been enrolled in the state elementary school system since the first grade. Two children reported having started

afternoon private English language lessons in the first grade, three between the third and fourth grades and three had no formal English language lessons outside of those provided as part of the school curriculum. This meant that even though the children were being raised bilingually several children had limited literacy skills in English.

## 7.1 School Involvement

This should not be seen to imply that the fathers were somehow absent or disenfranchised from their children's' education. Indeed all the families, particularly through the participation of Cypriot fathers, exhibited a healthy investment in the education of their children as demonstrated by their involvement with their children's schools. Of the seven families who participated in the study six were currently, or had previously been actively involved in the Parents Teachers' Associations of their respective schools; included in the group of parents' were three presidents or ex-presidents, one 'lifelong' treasurer and two committee members. This involvement was typically through the Cypriot parents' participation with more limited involvement by the non-Cypriot parent and certainly did not present a picture of families who were disinterested in the educational welfare of their children.

## 7.2 Dealing with their bilingualism

Surprisingly, although the families generally reported positive and frequent contact with the school through the PTA and teacher interviews, one parent characterized it as her children lacking the ability to get away with anything at school without her husband the PTA president hearing about it; there were only two families who reported having ever had a conversation with a teacher regarding any specific learning needs of their bilingual child. For one of the families the conversation took place in an informal context as more of an acknowledgement of the child's bilingualism and was not related

to addressing specific learning issues. In the case of the second family they reported several conversations which took place particularly within the first couple of years their child was at school. According to the parents these conversations tended to center on the reported difficulties the child was having in using and mastering Greek at school, and included recommendations that it would perhaps be better if they removed their child to a private English language school. The rest of the families could not recall having ever had a specific conversation with a teacher regarding their child's bilingualism although they all acknowledged that they believed the school knew the child was bilingual. One father expressed this lack of acknowledgement of his child's bilingualism with frustration and a reflection of the school system's and teachers' lack of caring towards children generally, and as an example of their inability to view any child as anything other than the same as all the others.

At the same time however several of the parents reported the schools' lack of acknowledgement of their child's bilingualism as positive. They stated that they were glad that their child had not be singled out as different, and spoke to the idea that they felt the school shouldn't differentiate these children as they felt it would have a negative effect on their school experience. However in further discussions with the parents there emerged conflicting feelings about this lack of acknowledgment. Certainly, almost all the parents expressed that they wanted their child to be treated – like the others. This was particularly the case when it came to being singled out for academic support where all but one of the parents clearly expressed that they would not have wanted their child to have been singled out and/or removed from the classroom for additional language support. Parents also generally expressed that they had not felt that their child had been treated differently by the school or individual teachers because they were bilingual – with the clear exception being references to English language class where the children were sometimes called upon to take a more active role, and references to participation in a Year of Diversity program which seemed to have worked its way through the elementary school system in 2008. However what emerged was that although the

parents were clear on the idea that they would have perceived any singling out of their child by the school as negative, they had previously expressed that they felt their child could have benefited from additional academic support. When questioned about this conflict, what emerged was a concern with social integration. On the one hand the parents felt that their child could have benefited from some individualized adjustment to their learning needs and they would have viewed this as positive. On the other hand, the parents were equally concerned that any overt move by the school to provide additional language support which they characterized as removing the child from the classroom for periods of time, would have stigmatized the child. Caught between the two sides the parents felt protecting their child from any social stigma connected with being pulled out of class was more important than any linguistic support they may have needed.

An additional area explored was an understanding expressed by the parents that the school system was currently undergoing significant pressure to change and adjust due to increased multiculturalism in the country. References to how multicultural their respective schools had become particularly in contrast to their own experiences or those of older children were repeatedly made during the interviews. The majority of parents viewed this diversity as positive while also recognizing that it meant the school system and the teachers were under increased pressure to adjust and adapt. Most parents acknowledged that they felt teachers and the school system were ill equipped to deal with this increased multiculturalism. Only one parent reported increased multiculturalism as not really an issue at her child's school, while also referring to it in covertly negative terms making reference to the increased multiculturalism in the country as leading towards a future where it will be difficult to find a "full blood Cypriot" in Cyprus. This type of language is currently not uncommon in the rhetoric of the right wing nationalist parties in Cyprus.

Issues of nationalism were generally not discussed during the interviews and in fact I often attempted to place them outside of the conversation by overtly putting them to the side of our conversation and trying to focus the conversation on issues of diversity and multiculturalism rather than the Greek/Turkish Cypriot debate. In a few cases however, issues of nationalism in the schools were raised by the parents. One parent explored in detail the value she felt the state system displayed in ensuring that the children were made to feel Greek exalting the value of the school system's focus on Greek history, language and religion. For other parents nationalism was not an issue they addressed directly during the interviews. However while offering advice to other parents one Cypriot mother explained that she had made the effort to visit her child's school before the major national holidays of April 1<sup>st</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup> in order to remind the teacher that the father was British. This she explained was her attempt to encourage the teacher to sensitively present Cypriot Independence from the British; she acknowledged however that she was unsure her visits had had any effect. Another mother concluded her interviews with advice on nationalism in quite different terms focusing instead on what she felt she could have done better. She explained that in some ways she wished she could have been more relaxed and would advise new parents not to allow their concerns about the school's approach to nationalism issues to rob them of the joy of their child's school experience. A sentiment perhaps best explained in her own words of advice to other parents where she stated, "Let her hold the gun; and then you can talk about it later."

### 7.3 Dimottico as the preferred choice.

Surprisingly even while acknowledging the difficulties they and their children had experienced in dealing with the state school system, when I asked the parents about whether their choice of Dimottico had been deliberate as opposed to financial for example, the parents responded that putting their child into the state system was something they had firmly agreed upon and committed to. Their reasoning for this was



varied but repeatedly importance was given to a commitment that their children be able to speak and use Greek well which they felt Dimottico would ensure. Additionally, considerable reference was made to the role of the school in socializing the children into the society and providing them with a sense of identity – making them feel Cypriot - in conjunction with facilitating their integration within their respective neighborhoods – expressed as a need for them to be seen as local, as Cypriot and to have friends in the neighborhood. These issues were often presented in direct contrast to the experiences they perceived children who attended private English language primary schools had. So that even though several of the parents acknowledged that they planned to move their child into a private English language secondary school – a not uncommon practice in Cyprus – and despite the varied issues they had experienced in dealing with the state system; when asked if they had the chance to do it differently and not go through the state system they would, no family in the study reported that they would do it differently. In fact the families were quite vocal in their commitment to the state system stating that not only would they do it again, they would also advise new comers to enroll their children in the state school. This sense of commitment to the state school system was certainly not a blind commitment as the parents were also critical and aware of a variety of aspects of the system. What they recommended was that as parents entering the system you should be aware of what you were getting yourself into. One parent put it in terms of advice to others by stating that she would advise new parents to think carefully about if they were going to be okay with the state system as it is; because in her opinion you would not be able to change it.

#### 7.4 Missed other culture

An area where several parents expressed that they wished they had done things differently was in the way that they had portrayed their *other* culture to their children. Several non-Cypriot parents felt that they had not perhaps done the best job informing and exploring their own cultures with their children and that the children perhaps didn't

really know what it meant to be American, British or Canadian. Much of this sentiment was expressed in response to increased interest from the children as they get older and also in terms of expectations of others who would presume that the children understood certain cultural references in a more intrinsic manner than perhaps they did.

In discussing the role of the other culture and how it related to the experience of Dimottico one mother explored this struggle to provide a space for her daughter's other culture/identity by stating that she felt Dimottico itself had such an identity that if you were not Cypriot/Greek then you were really as she put it "something different". She stated that particularly in her initial interactions with the school she had tried extremely hard to be viewed as Cypriot as she not felt neither the space nor strength to express her otherness or to encourage her daughter to do so; a decision which she now regretted. Further in her conversation she verbalized her reason for now wanting to provide more space for this otherness with her child. She characterized it as a response to her developing understanding that Dimottico was nonresponsive to who her child was. She referenced this by stating that as she viewed it now she recognized that these children don't necessarily see themselves in what is around them at school for example they may not look Cypriot and therefore they do not personify the images in the textbooks etcetera yet the school does little to acknowledge this difference. The approach of the school is as she put it part of the demand of conformity made by the culture so the school system in her opinion retorts "conform, conform, conform" to difference.